

# THE PERSONALITY OF PAUL

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**T**WELVE Studies of one of the greatest characters the world has produced. The amazing influence which the Apostle of the Gentiles exercised over the minds and hearts of men is discussed with sympathy and understanding. Questions for study circles are appended to the readings.

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By H. G. TUNNICLIFF, B.A.

PROPERTY OF  
CHURCH ON THE WAY

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The personality of Paul



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BY  
H. G. TUNNICLIFF, B.A.

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TO THOSE WHO,  
HAVING ENRICHED MY LIFE  
BY THE ROYAL GIFT OF THEIR FELLOWSHIP,  
HAVE MADE ME FOR EVER  
THEIR AFFECTIONATE DEBTOR



## PREFACE

THESE Studies are not theological. Their aim is to penetrate to Paul the man himself, and to catch the influence of his amazing personality. As Dr. Stanley Jones has reminded us in *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 'The early disciples had little ritual but a mighty realization. They went out, not remembering Christ, but realizing Him.'

My aim has been to pass through theology to the centre of Paul's thought and life, to discover his secret.

The six Daily Readings are intended to provoke creative thought such as will find its issue in consecrated action. The seventh day is devoted to a Summary to which questions are appended.

For those who will use these Studies in group work, I would suggest that the seventh day would most appropriately be that on which the group meets. Both the Summary and the Daily Readings should be carefully considered by every member *before* the group meets.

I very gratefully acknowledge the valuable help which I have received from my friend, the Rev. G. R. Holt Shafto, an acknowledged authority on work of this kind.

H. G. T.

EXMOUTH, February, 1927.

‘ Men are we,’ and we must needs wonder, a little wistfully, concerning the forerunners, our kinsmen who, having achieved certain things we despair to improve or even to rival, have gone their way, leaving so much to be guessed.

‘ How splendid,’ we say, ‘ to have known them. Let us delve back and discover all we can about them.’

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH :

*Shakespeare's Workmanship.*

‘ Every month I am more and more driven to Paul. I think you heard “ Paul ” and “ Paul ” and “ Paul ” countless times in my ministry here. I think he has got the key. I feel that if ever mortal man had the key of the house I want opened, he has got it.’

J. H. JOWETT.

## CONTENTS

STUDY	PAGE
I. PAUL THE MAN . . . . .	II
II. PAUL'S COURAGE . . . . .	2I
III. PAUL'S JOY . . . . .	3I
IV. PAUL'S PATIENCE . . . . .	4I
V. PAUL'S GRATITUDE . . . . .	5I
VI. PAUL'S OPTIMISM . . . . .	6I
VII. PAUL'S FRIENDSHIP . . . . .	7I
VIII. PAUL'S AMBITIONS . . . . .	8I
IX. PAUL'S HUMILITY . . . . .	9I
X. PAUL'S DEVOTION . . . . .	IOI
XI. PAUL'S CHARM . . . . .	III
XII. PAUL'S SECRET . . . . .	II9





PAUL THE MAN



## STUDY I

### PAUL THE MAN

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—*Phil. iii.* 3-6; *2 Cor. xi.* 22; *Rom. xi.* 1; *Acts xxi.* 39.

Paul always rejoiced in his Jewish ancestry, and gratefully recalled the religious privileges of his nation. His God was 'the God of my fathers.' Driven to self-defence by the taunts of his adversaries, he promptly and proudly declared his lineage, his descent from Abraham and Isaac.

Yet our first thought of Paul is neither of a Jew nor of a Roman citizen. His name connotes the world's greatest Christian. His laudable love of his own town and his own folk was submerged beneath his love of Jesus, a love which overwhelmed all racial pride and parochial prejudice.

'Co-operation must ever fail where Christians set nation and empire above the Kingdom of God, earthly aims above heavenly purposes, national divisions above the oneness of the church of Christ' (Dr. J. R. Mott).

Paul had mastered that lesson.

**Second Day.**—*Gal. i.* 13, 14; *Acts xxii.* 3-5, *xxiii.* 6, *xxvi.* 4-7.

Paul's training and traditions were strictly Judaic. He became a Pharisee and a fanatic. 'Ye traverse sea and land to win a single convert,' said Jesus of them, and Paul was full of such activity. Scandalized by the discovery that there were men and women who believed and declared that Jesus of Nazareth, the denouncer of irreligious Pharisees, was the long expected Messiah, and that He was alive again, though

'crucified, dead, and buried,' Paul addressed himself to the congenial task of slaying this new sect. It must have cost him much to abandon the religious outlook of boyhood and youth, to ally himself with those whom hitherto he had regarded as enemies of the truth, to face the horror and detestation with which his own family, devout Jews, would regard his conversion. Sadhu Sundar Singh turned to Jesus from the religion of his childhood, and was flung, poisoned, from his home. Charles Wesley, a public school and university man, was willing to learn even of Mr. Bray, 'a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ, yet, by knowing Him, knows and discerns all things.'

**Third Day.**—*Acts xvii. 28; Titus i. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 33.*

Paul's boyhood was spent at Tarsus, famed for its university life. Strabo declared that its schools surpassed even those of Alexandria and Athens. He completed his education at Jerusalem under Gamaliel, an ardent Jew, yet broadminded enough to encourage Greek studies. Stoic terms are sprinkled through Paul's letters. In Athens, 'he was not indifferent even to the sights of the university city of the world, which united in itself so many memorials of history and of education. The feelings which would rise in the mind of an American scholar from Harvard, seeing Oxford for the first time, were not alien to Paul's spirit. The mere Jew could never have assumed the Attic tone as Paul did. He was in Athens the student of a great university visiting an older but yet a kindred university, surveying it with appreciative admiration, and mixing in its society as an equal conversing with men of like education' (W. M. Ramsay).

His acute mind, his rapier thrusts in debate, the freshness of his thought, showed the might of his trained

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intellect. He obeyed the commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy . . . mind.' To him mental sloth meant moral sloth.

**Fourth Day.**—*1 Cor. xv. 32 ; 2 Tim. ii. 5, iv. 7, 8 ; Phil. ii. 16 ; 1 Cor. ix. 24-27.*

Paul had a keen zest for life. His eyes and ears were wide open. He was interested in men's occupations and their recreations as well. There is a widespread theory that the Christian is the kill-joy. Jesus never suggested that. He shared in social feasts, His first miracle was performed at a wedding reception, and He was always interested in the games that children played. Paul had 'the mind of Christ.' He enjoyed the thrill of the foot-race, he understood the regimen of training, and was familiar with the terms of the boxing ring.

Dr. Deissmann has called attention to the true humanity of Paul, and to the error of the traditional view which 'has but too often made of him a parchment saint unacquainted with the world.' Paul had learned the secret of being 'in the world' without being 'of the world,' and, by his wide horizon and unflagging interest in life, kept himself from the peril of narrowness and bigotry.

**Fifth Day.**—*Rom. xiii. 7, 8 ; Eph. i. 13, 14, v. 15, 16 ; Col. iv. 5 ; 2 Cor. ii. 17, i. 21, 22.*

All these metaphors show Paul's interest in the business world of his day. Debtor and creditor, the discerning and grasping an opportunity for making a profit even in bad times, the owners' stamps upon goods and packages, the deposit paid as a pledge of completed payment later—all these have been noted by him, and are used in his letters to men and women who would understand him perfectly, because he spoke

the language of everyday life. He sanctified the secular. Brother Lawrence, cook in the monastery kitchen of the bare-footed Carmelites, had caught his spirit. 'His very countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect all beholders. And it was observed that, in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen, he still preserved his recollection and his heavenly mindedness. . . . "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."'

**Sixth Day.**—*Acts xx.* 34, 35; *Philem.* 11; *Rom.* xiii. 7; *I Cor.* iv. 3, 4, *iii.* 11, 12; *2 Cor.* ii. 14, 15.

Paul was interested in all the tide of human life surging around him. He knew the details of a Roman triumph, he was interested in building. He himself worked steadily at the disagreeable craft of making tents from cloth woven from goats' hair. He had watched soldiers all his life, and the enforced association with them in his prison days made him familiar with every detail of their armour and equipment. He had stood in the courts and was acquainted with judicial procedure. His quiet humour twinkles in his letters. Onesimus means 'Profitable' and Paul played pleasantly on the name. In *Rom.* xiii, 7, there is a pun on phoros, tribute, and phobos, fear. Mr. Strachan has suggested that by substituting 'money' for 'tribute' and using the word 'gear' in its Scotch sense of money, the pun can be imitated in English: 'gear to whom gear—fear to whom fear.'

## SUMMARY

In 'The Acts of Paul and Thecla,' Paul's arrival at Lystra is thus described: 'And he saw Paul coming, a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well built, with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, full of grace. For sometimes he looked like a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel.' That is all we know of Paul's personal appearance, and even this source dates from the second century; but from the vivid narrative of Acts, with its graphic touches, we learn not only much concerning his peculiarities of gesture, but we are able to look into the very heart of a man amazingly alive.

He was fond of using his hands as he spoke. He showed his toil-worn hands to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts xx. 34). On the stairs of the castle at Jerusalem he beckoned with the hand (Acts xxi. 40). On his defence before Agrippa, he stretched forth his hand (Acts xxvi. 1).

As we turn to his letters, we are made to see that they are not first and foremost theological treatises, but vigorous messages in non-literary Greek, each evoked by some peculiar situation, and we see the man himself plainly mirrored in their pages, 'a saint without a luminous halo.'

Despite the Greek environment of his early years at Tarsus, Paul was essentially a Jew. At the same time he was always proud of the status and privilege conferred by his Roman citizenship. He promptly declared that he was a Roman born when the officer ordered him to be examined under the scourge at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 28). He used that Roman citizenship with dramatic effect at Philippi (Acts xvi. 37-9).

He spoke Aramaic (Acts xxi. 40), though his Old Testament quotations are from the Septuagint, and at Tarsus he would speak Greek in his intercourse with those outside the Jewish circle. He was intensely

proud of his Abrahamic descent and of his association with Israel (Rom. iv. 16, ix. 3-5, xi. 1, 2).

He had mastered the rabbinical method of allegorizing, and was familiar with the ancient legends of his people.

But he was not merely a student in the rabbinical college—'The House of Interpretation'—under the broad-minded Gamaliel; he was also a craftsman. He could speak of his work to the Thessalonians, as an example to them (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8). He reminded the Corinthians that he worked with his own hands (1 Cor. iv. 12), and it was at Corinth that he joined Aquila and Priscilla, who also were tentmakers (Acts xviii. 1-3). He spoke of his body as a tent (2 Cor. v. 1). The big sprawling letters with which he wrote (Gal. vi. 11) were most likely due to the coarseness of his fingers, hardened through handling the thick haircloth, tough as leather.

His vivid illustrations showed his familiarity with athletics. Dr. Deissmann has pointed out that the words, 'I have fought in the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith; now the crown of a good life awaits me,' are quite in the style of an inscription relating to an athletic champion.

Soldiers were around him throughout his life, and he knew every detail of their equipment—belt, coat of mail, leather shoes, oblong wooden shield covered with hide, helmet which protected cheeks and forehead as well as the top of the head, and projected, like a collar, round the neck, and the powerful sword with blade so keen as to cut with either edge (Eph. vi.). He had heard the trumpet calls (1 Cor. xiv. 8). He knew something of strategy and the laws of warfare (2 Cor. x. 3-6).

In Rome there was always a soldier guarding him; but from that reminder of his perpetual bondage there sprang that exquisite picture of the peace of God standing sentinel over the hearts and minds of all lovers of Jesus (Phil. iv. 7). He urged Timothy

to bear himself like a single-minded soldier (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4). He saw the glorious resurrection host marching division by division (1 Cor. xv. 23).

He was familiar with the procedure of the law and with the corruption in its administration. God justifies men freely (Rom. iii. 24), in marked contrast to Paul's own experience with Felix, who wanted a bribe (Acts xxiv. 26).

He had witnessed the grim scenes of the arena and likened the apostles to gladiators (1 Cor. iv. 9).

He was interested in commerce, in the transactions of the wealthy merchant as well as in the simple marketing of the less well-to-do (1 Cor. x. 25).

A tentmaker himself, he had watched men of other crafts at their toil (Rom. ix. 21).

A man of marvellous vitality, he exerted a marked influence wherever he moved. 'He could never be listened to with indifference. His preaching excited warm assent or contradiction. He set all minds astir and in debate around him; his presence and discourse acted like an electric current that drives to opposite poles the mingled elements through which it passes' (Dr. G. G. Findlay).

So, from the Acts and from his own vivid letters, there rises the fascinating portrait of Paul the man. No remote hermit or cloistered student; no pallid ascetic or useless visionary; but a warm and tender human being, finding interest in the common things of life, glad as he walked through the marvels of the city streets or sailed over the ever changing seas, because the fullness of the earth was his Lord's. He obeyed the advice he gave to the Philippians concerning their thoughts (Phil. iv. 8), and thereby reaped an immediate reward.

He was a citizen of two worlds, and Francis Thompson's words concerning Shelley are truer still of him, 'He stood thus at the very junction lines of the visible and invisible, and could shift the points as he willed.'



QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Dr. Deissmann dismissed Paul's scholarship, assigning him to the artisan non-literary classes. Jerome wrote, 'Paul was not ignorant of secular literature.' In the light of your reading, who is right?
2. Paul wrote to the Romans (xii. 2) 'Instead of being conformed to this world, get your mind renewed.' How would he define worldliness?
3. Young Athleticus has no use for the Church, which he regards as a home for infants and invalids. How may Paul be brought in to help him?
4.               Not in the tombs we pine to dwell,  
                  Not in the dark monastic cell,  
                  By vows and grates confined.

How would Paul comment on that? Is there only one form of monasticism, and one type of 'grate'?

## PAUL'S COURAGE



## STUDY II

### PAUL'S COURAGE

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—1 *Cor. ii. 3* ; 2 *Cor. vii. 5, x. 10, xii. 10.*

Note this striking revelation. Paul was not fearless. His intrepidity was not natural, but heaven sent. These vivid passages of his autobiography afford a suggestive insight into the costliness of his struggles. As he ran counter to his friends and challenged ancient custom ; when he dared the dangers of the deep ; when he fought with beasts at Ephesus ; he was not following the dictates of a combative nature. Physically hampered by the ' stake in the flesh,' he was not filled with a lust for fighting. By nature he shrank from the fray, and entered it with trembling, until he braced himself with the realization of the nearness and power of the Captain of his salvation.

**Second Day.**—*Phil. iv. 13* ; 2 *Tim. iv. 16, 17* ; *Gal. ii. 20.*

Here we have courage indeed ! Examine the sources of Paul's strength. He disclosed his secret to the beloved members of the Philippian Church, to Timothy, ' his lawful son in the faith,' and to the vacillating Galatians. His strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was yielded freely and utterly to his Master. His life was not his own ; he lived and moved and had his being in the fearless Jesus. Recall the strong souls of history—Luther challenging the power of the papacy ; George Fox defying time-serving justices ; Wesley fearlessly facing murderous mobs.

Witness the men whom with a word He gaineth,  
Bold who were base and voiceful who were dumb :  
Battle, I know, as long as life remaineth,  
Battle for all, but these have overcome.

These all shared Paul's secret : ' In Him . . . I can do all things.'

**Third Day.**—*Acts xix.* 23–32.

Here Luke has vividly depicted the seething tumult of the eastern city, the passion of the vested interests, the violence of the ignorant mob, and the perilous plight of Gaius and Aristarchus. ' The superstition of all Asia was concentrated in Ephesus. Throughout the early centuries the city mobs, superstitious, uneducated, frivolous, swayed by the most commonplace motives, were everywhere the most dangerous and unfailing enemy of Christianity ' (Ramsay).

Paul, in obedience to the call of loyalty, was ready to thrust himself into this inferno—loyalty to his comrades, and, above all, loyalty to his Lord—for here, he felt, was a great opportunity to witness for his Lord, even though that witness were to cost him his life. Then, as later, he was ' ready to be offered up.' Are you as loyal to your friends, your Church, and your Master ?

**Fourth Day.**—*Phil. i.* 12–14.

In such circumstances as those in which Paul found himself when at last he arrived in Rome he might well have written a letter of complaint. Liberty seemed far off, and loyal friends were painfully few. There was but little chance of preaching in the heart of the Empire, but he saw that his prison might be transformed into a pulpit. Long ago he had uttered the ardent wish, ' I must see Rome.' Now that wish was gratified, yet how differently from his expectations !



But, after all, he was in Rome, and he determined to make the most of his straitened field of service.

Our sorrows, disappointments, and losses are just magnificent opportunities of bearing witness to the peace of God standing sentinel over our hearts. Brave resignation and cheerful courage are always eloquent. Dr. H. E. Fosdick has told how a friend of his, who was hopelessly paralysed, was addressed in sympathy by an acquaintance, who said, 'Affliction does so colour the life.' 'Yes,' was the brave invalid's answer, 'and I propose to choose the colour.'

**Fifth Day.**—*Acts ix.* 19–22, *ix.* 27–30 ; *Gal. i.* 16, 17.

Note the supreme courage of these acts. *He lost no time* in declaring his changed outlook and new allegiance. Saul the persecutor became the preacher. Conversion was swiftly followed by confession.

William James has told us : ' I remember long ago reading in an Austrian newspaper the advertisement of a certain Rudolf Somebody who promised fifty gulden reward to anybody who after that date should find him in the wineshop of Ambrosius So-and-So. " This I do," the advertisement continued, " in consequence of a promise which I have made to my wife." ' Rudolf and Paul had learned the rules which James laid down : ' in the acquisition of a new habit, or the leaving off of an old one, we must take care to launch ourselves with as strong and decided an initiative as possible. Accumulate all the possible circumstances which shall re-enforce the right motives ; make engagements incompatible with the old way.'

**Sixth Day.**—*Acts xiv.* 19, 20, *xxi.* 12, 13.

James Chalmers cried : ' Recall the twenty-one years, give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standings in the face of death, give it me

surrounded with savages with spears and clubs, give it me back again with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give it me back, and I will still be your missionary.'

Julian Grenfell wrote from the front in the Great War : ' Here we are in the burning centre of it all, and I would not be anywhere else for a million pounds and for the Queen of Sheba.'

That is the spirit which flamed in Paul. It inspired Paul's Master, who said to His disciples, ' Let us go back to Judaea,' where, only a little while before, the Jews had sought to stone Him ; who, facing the pain and shame of the cruel cross, set His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem.

It is the spirit which wins a war—which alone can win the war against darkness, disease, and the devil. Is yours a cushioned Christianity, or have you that spirit ?

## SUMMARY

Paul faced rabble, storm, and death with unfaltering courage. Recall his frequent encounters with howling, frenzied mobs. In Damascus he experienced an early foretaste of what was to follow. The Jews conspired to murder him, and so close was the watch which his foes kept on the gates, both day and night, that he had to make his escape by being lowered in a basket over the wall. In Jerusalem the Hellenists tried to kill him ; he and Barnabas were driven out of Pisidian Antioch ; he was stoned at Lystra and Iconium ; he was roughly handled by the crowd at Philippi ; in Thessalonica, Jason's house, where Paul was a guest, was attacked by an uproarious mob ; at Beroea there was a riot ; and at Ephesus he fought with wild beasts.

On his final visit to Jerusalem the crowd was so violent that the Roman officer was compelled to intervene with his men in order to ensure Paul's safety, whilst, in the Sanhedrin, feeling ran so high that there was every prospect of Paul's being torn in pieces. There were actually forty men in Jerusalem bound by a solemn oath neither to eat nor drink till they had slain the apostle.

Paul's graphic apologia, evoked by the taunts of his opponents, showed what he had endured (2 Cor. xi. 24-7).

His moral courage, too, is noteworthy. Immediately upon his conversion at Damascus, he publicly allied himself with the Christians whom he had set out to persecute. At Lystra, when he had recovered consciousness after being stoned, he went into the town again. At Athens, eager to learn how the converts at Thessalonica were faring, he sent Timothy thither, though it meant being left alone in a great heathen city. Later, he let Timothy go to Philippi, although

he was his greatest solace. In Rome he had to face his trial alone. He shared the experience of his Master, for all his disciples forsook him and fled.

He was willing to risk his popularity by painfully plain speech, when he felt that such a course was his duty. He dealt faithfully with the vacillating Peter, opposed the too-indulgent Barnabas, was outspoken to the fickle Galatians and the ungrateful Corinthians. His letters were shot through and through with exhortations to courage.

His own courage was the fruit of his close attachment to the strong Son of God. All life's experiences, good and ill alike, were shaped by divine hands. He knew that he was being upheld by a Love that would never let him go, and therefore he was calm and fearless even in the most trying and terrifying circumstance.

The cross of Jesus gave him boldness. As we turn to the cross, we think with gratitude of reconciliation, and of the love that spent itself to the uttermost. Paul shared such thoughts, but the cross was still more to him. It inspired him to dauntless courage. If Jesus, the Lord, had resolutely faced His cross, must not he, the servant, also take up his cross daily, and follow? It was through the Christ who strengthened him that he could meet every situation.

If God was for him, it mattered little who was against him. He was a shining example of the truth of the declaration of the Book of Daniel, 'The people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits' (Dan. xi. 32).

William Lloyd Garrison, in his fight against slavery, was denounced, mobbed, and imprisoned, but he never faltered until the victory was won. Visiting this country afterwards, he said, 'Henceforth, through all coming time, advocates of justice that are, and are to be, be not discouraged, for you will and you

must succeed if you have a righteous cause. No matter how few may be prepared to rally round the standard you may raise, if you walk by justice, if your faith be a faith that cannot be shaken, because it is linked to the eternal throne, it is only a question of time when victory has to come to reward your toils. Slavery—the strongest thing in the world—where is it now? And so it was, and so it ever will be, throughout the earth, in every battle for the right.'

That was Paul's creative creed; and so, despite the thorn in the flesh, envenomed opposition, disappointments in the very Churches themselves, he steered fearlessly onward through every storm, singing, as he sailed, the song of one who had triumphed through Him who loved His servant and called him friend.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Paul told the Philippians that they had the favour of 'waging the same warfare as . . . I wage myself.' Is warfare a 'favour'? Define Paul's warfare.
2. Mark Sabre said: 'It helps in all sorts of ways to think things out as they happen to you.' How did Paul think them out?
3. Paul continually preached courage. Is such preaching needed to-day? Does the Church of God move 'like a mighty army'? Do you behave like a soldier on active service?
4. Examine carefully what the cross meant to Paul.

PAUL'S JOY





### STUDY III. PAUL'S JOY

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—*Acts xvi.* 16-26.

Paul's joy was no creation of the sunshine, a transient emotion shrivelled by the chill and ruthless winds of adversity. Note all the grim details of the episode. The rough handling by the enraged owners of the slave-girl, the stripping for scourging, the cruel lash of the lictors' rods—many lashes—the dark, fetid dungeon, the cramping of their legs in the stocks, the sultry heat of an Eastern night with an earthquake impending, no air and wretched ventilation. But 'about midnight' Paul was singing! He had received the fulfilment of the beatitude, 'Blessed are you when men denounce you and persecute you and utter all manner of evil against you for My sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad.'

**Second Day.**—*Phil. i.* 12-18.

'He was a prisoner; and not only was he vexed by the hostility of a powerful party in the Roman Church, but his prospect was dark and ominous. The long deferment of his appeal was disquieting, and the rumours which reached him of Jewish machinations and imperial tyranny justified gloomy forebodings of the final issue. His spirit might well have been oppressed, yet it was light and glad. "Joy" is the letter's refrain, occurring oftener within its brief compass than in any other' (David Smith). Note the wellspring of his joy. His imprisonment had brought him into the closest touch with the Praetorian

Guards, and even the implacable hostility of the Judaists was leading men to examine his message, so that Jesus was being 'openly placarded' in the heart of imperial Rome. For him it was indeed

Life's best joy, to see Thy praise  
Fly on wings of gospel light,  
Leading on millennial days,  
Scattering all the shades of night !

**Third Day.**—*Phil. i. 4, 25, ii. 29, iii. 1, iv. 4.*

In this letter, and in that to Philemon, we see Paul's natural disposition and outlook. He had a sunny nature, bubbling over with humour. Consider the happy impression that this letter, with its reiterated references to 'joy,' makes upon you. Here we have an indication of one of the sources of Paul's power. He never faltered in his 'great task of happiness.' Ruskin declared that 'we are converted, not to long and gloomy faces, but to round and laughing ones.'

Oliver Wendell Holmes used to say that he would probably have become a minister if the minister who called at his home when he was a boy had not looked and talked so much like an undertaker. To Irene Petrie, the brilliant and consecrated young missionary who gave her life for Kashmir, these two tributes were paid: 'She always gave me the impression of one satisfied. Her joy was full. We saw it in her face as a schoolgirl, and in later years. That happy face will ever be before us when we think of her.' And another friend wrote: 'That almost joyous cheerfulness of spirit drew even strangers to her, and made her loved wherever she went.'

**Fourth Day.**—*1 Thess. ii. 17-20, iii. 6-9.*

Paul had learned the joy that comes from communion with absent friends who share the same ideals and

serve the same Lord. The thought of them saved him from utter despair. He was so keen to be of service that he forgot his own sorrows. As the Spanish proverb crudely yet truly puts it, 'The dog that is hunting does not feel the insects.' Hopeful, in crossing the dark river at the end of his pilgrimage, was so occupied in cheering and upholding Christian that he had no time to think of his own fears. John Wesley wrote in his *Journal* for January 2, 1738: 'Being sorrowful and very heavy (though I could give no particular reason for it), and utterly unwilling to speak close to any of my little flock (about twenty persons), I was in doubt whether my neglect of them was not one cause of my own heaviness. In the evening, therefore, I began instructing the cabin-boy; after which I was much easier.' The cabin-boy's journal is not available, so that we do not know what the effect of the instruction was on him! But Wesley had learned the way of joyful service.

**Fifth Day.**—*Phil. ii. 1-4, iv. 1; 1 Cor. xiii. 6.*

On Christiana's arrival at the Interpreter's house, 'those within . . . leaped for joy'; at the Palace Beautiful, 'there came to the door one of the damsels, whose name was Humble-mind; and to her the porter said, Go tell it within, that Christiana, the wife of Christian, and her children are come hither on pilgrimage. She went in, therefore, and told it. But, oh! what noise for gladness was there within when the damsel did drop that out of her mouth.'

That was Paul's spirit. News of the spread of the gospel always marvellously cheered him. Nothing wounded him more than to learn of dissension, degeneracy, or defection in the Churches. Myers well makes Paul say:

Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,  
Yes, without stay of father or of son,  
Lone on the land and homeless on the water  
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me  
Waketh Him workers for the great employ.  
Oh, not in solitude, if souls that hear me  
Catch from my joyaunce the surprise of joy.

**Sixth Day.**—*Phil. ii. 17, 18 ; Col. i. 24 ; 2 Cor. vi. 4-10.*

Paul had entered into the joy of his Lord. J. H. Jowett wrote on the Parable of the Lost Sheep : ' And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost ! Could they do it ? I know that they could come to his house, and sit down to the feast, and enjoy the good things provided, and fill the house with music and song. But could they really enter into his joy ? Suppose that among his neighbours there were some who had been with him upon the wilds, who had dared the dangers of the heights and the terrors of the beasts, who had trudged with tired feet far into the chilly night—would not these be just the neighbours who would be able to enter into the shepherd's joy ? To enter into the joy of finding, we must have entered into the pain of seeking. To enter into the joy of my Lord, I, too, must become " a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." '

## SUMMARY

'Throw Hopeful into any river, he was like a cork and could not be kept down,' wrote Edward Lloyd Jones. That is equally true of Paul. 'Over and over again there is a sound of singing in Paul' (T. R. Glover). His doxologies and Te Deums rose at unwonted hours and in singular places. If he was flung, bruised and bleeding, into a stuffy prison, he sang at midnight. If he was aboard a prison ship, driving to her doom, he gave thanks. If men denounced him and persecuted him, he rejoiced; these troubles but gave him an opportunity to triumph (Rom. v. 3). He rejoiced even when men preached Christ from base motives (Phil. i. 18). In his hours of devotion he prayed with joy (Phil. i. 4).

Professor Jacks has written of Stopford Brooke: 'Between him and joy there was an irresistible affinity, and even in circumstance the most depressing he could find for himself a sunny nook, and reflect the sunshine on those about him.' That is an apt description of Paul.

Again and again in his letters we find him stressing the place of joy in the Christian life. The Kingdom of God is . . . joy (Rom. xiv. 17). His God is a God of hope (Rom. xv. 13). One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy (Gal. v. 22). Sanday and Headlam thus have rendered Rom. xii. 8: 'Let any man or woman who performs deeds of mercy in the Church do so brightly and cheerfully.'

In the garden of great souls only do such flowers bloom. David Hill, when his wrist was almost smashed in a Chinese riot, cried: 'There is a deep joy in actually suffering physical violence for Christ's sake.' And in his last days this verse was often on his lips:

In a rapture of joy  
My life I employ  
The God of my life to proclaim ;  
'Tis worth living for, this,  
To administer bliss  
And salvation in Jesus's name.

John Nelson had entered into the glory of Paul's experience when he wrote in his journal : ' When I came into the dungeon, that stunk worse than a hog-stye by reason of the blood and filth which sink from the butchers who kill over it, my soul was so filled with the love of God that it was a paradise to me.' Paul's message was one of thrilling joy. He was sure of God's nearness in every circumstance of life (Acts xxvii. 22-5). For the Roman Church he sounded some of his most exultant notes (Rom. v. 1-5, viii. 35-9).

Every sign of the coming of the Kingdom gladdened Paul (Rom. xvi. 19). Hearing good news of the spiritual progress of the Churches, he was filled with exultation (2 Cor. vii. 4, 7 ; Col. i. 24, ii. 5 ; 1 Thess. ii. 20).

As Dr. Rendel Harris has written : ' Nothing is so musical to Paul as the soul of a believer.'

Bunyan, in his simple and lucid way, recorded this piece of his experience : ' But upon a day the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work on my calling ; and, in one of the streets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women, sitting at a door in the sun, and talking about the things of God ; and, being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said. But I may say, I heard, but I understood not ; for they were far above, out of my reach. Methought they spake as if joy did make them speak ; they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to



me as if they had found a new world, as if they were a people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned amongst their neighbours.'

In a world stricken with despair Paul always sat 'in the sun,' and 'spake as if joy did make him speak,' so that he infected others with his buoyancy, and so letting the light shine that, as Dr. Orchard has put it: 'Others turned to see whence the light came.'

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Dr. Watkinson once saw an advertisement for a lady help in a South African journal : ' A Christian preferred ; cheerful if possible.' Give Paul's comments on that.
2. ' I can never enjoy the walk I have chosen for thinking of all the others I might have selected instead. . . . Any time or place seems brighter than the present ; on the hill-tops my longing is for the river-side, and when there I am aching for the heights ' (George Tyrrell). How would Paul deal with such a temperament ?
3. Luke's Gospel is full of music. Give some account of his music lessons.
4. Martha Minor says, ' I can't be joyful in my circumstances.' How have our studies helped us to find an answer to her ?

PAUL'S PATIENCE



## STUDY IV PAUL'S PATIENCE

### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—1 *Thess. v. 14* ; 2 *Tim. ii. 24-6* ; *Eph. iv. 1-3*.

Thomas à Kempis wrote : ' It is no great matter to associate with the good and gentle, for this is naturally pleasing to all, and every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those best that agree with him. But to be able to live peaceably with hard and perverse persons or with the disorderly, or with such as go contrary to us, is a most commendable and manly thing.'

St. Francis de Sales urged : ' If you would fall into any extreme, let it be on the side of gentleness. The human mind is so constructed that it resists rigour, and yields to softness. A mild word quenches anger, as water quenches the rage of fire ; and by benignity any soil may be rendered fruitful. Truth, uttered with courtesy, is heaping coals of fire on the head—or, rather, throwing roses in the face. How can we resist a foe whose weapons are pearls and diamonds ? ' Recall, also, the Parable of the Two Debtors.

**Second Day.**—2 *Cor. vi. 3-7, xii. 12*.

' Patience in the passage before us . . . brings before our minds the conditions under which Paul did his apostolic work. Discouragements of every description, bad health, suspicion, dislike, contempt, moral apathy, and moral licence—the weight of all these pressed upon him heavily, but he bore up under them, and did not suffer them to break his spirit or to arrest his labours ' (Dr. Denney). There were disappointing and cranky people, but he

held bravely on. The Church at Corinth nearly broke his heart because of the laxity prevailing in its very midst, but he did not 'wash his hands of them.' He spoke of 'ministering to the saints,' and Hubert L. Simpson has reminded us that: 'It meant going off to a place he had no special desire ever to see again, to try and help people who didn't particularly want to be helped, and who would probably misunderstand and criticize and resent all he tried to do for them. "Ministering to the saints"—a truly Pauline euphemism for preaching to empty pews, and sitting on dreary committees, and beating up for Church funds, and doing all those things that seemed to make his cherished dream fade into even dimmer and remoter distance—Spain and Rome, and the handshake of Rufus, "that choice Christian," and the sweet face of Julia.'

**Third Day.**—*Col. i. 11* ; *2 Tim. ii. 3* ; *2 Thess. iii. 13* ; *Gal. vi. 9*.

The Slough of Despond sent Pliable sneaking homeward, and the roar of the lions on the Hill Difficulty filled the hearts of Mistrust and Timorous with fear. But, though Mr. Fearing lay a month at the Slough, one sunshiny morning he crossed in safety, and Christian discovered that the menacing lions were chained. As 'a loyal soldier of Jesus Christ,' Paul shaped his life on the divine plan, not on his own. He, like Moses, 'endured as seeing Him who is invisible.' Recall Trench's lines :

Why have we yet no great deliverance wrought,  
Why have we not truth's banner yet unfurled,  
High floating in the face of all the world,  
Why do we live and yet accomplish naught ?  
These are the stirrings of unquiet thought,  
What time the years pass from us of our youth,  
And we unto the altar of high truth  
As yet no worthy offering have brought.

But now we bid these restless longings cease ;  
If heaven has aught for us to do or say,  
Our time will come ; and we may well hold peace,  
When He, till thrice ten years had passed away,  
In stillness and in quietness up-grew,  
Whose word once spoken should make all things new.

**Fourth Day.**—1 *Cor. xiii.* 4-7 ; *Gal. v.* 22 ; 1 *Tim. ii.* 8.

It is noteworthy that, in his exquisite Hymn of Love, Paul twice mentions Love's patience, and amid the ripe sheaves of the harvest of the Spirit he finds good-temper. That is a sheaf we too often overlook, for Henry Drummond truly said: 'Temper is the vice of the virtuous.' Paul would have agreed with Bishop Wilson when he wrote: 'Temper is nine-tenths of Christianity.' Frances Ridley Havergal was familiar with the snare of impatience, and she wrote: 'A vexation arises, and our expressions of impatience hinder others from taking it patiently. Disappointment, ailment, or even weather depresses us, and our look or tone of depression hinders others from maintaining a cheerful and thankful spirit. We say an unkind thing, and another is hindered in learning the holy lesson of charity that thinketh no evil. We say a provoking thing, and our sister or brother is hindered in that day's effort to be meek. How sadly, too, we may hinder without word or act. For wrong feeling is more infectious than wrong doing ; especially the various phases of ill-temper, gloominess, touchiness, discontent, irritability—do we not know how catching these are ?'

**Fifth Day.**—2 *Thess. i.* 3-5, 11, 12.

Paul saw in suffering a great opportunity. That which others regarded as a stumbling-block he viewed as a stepping-stone. However widely he and James

may appear to differ as theologians, they were one in their Christian practice, and Paul would add his word of approval to James's call, 'Greet it as pure joy, my brothers, when you come across any sort of trial, sure that the sterling temper of your faith produces endurance; only, let your endurance be a finished product' (Moffatt).

At the close of his life, Paul, imprisoned 'as if I were a criminal,' could write to Timothy, 'I have run my course.' Throughout that course he welcomed

each rebuff

That turns earth's smoothness rough.

And at the end of it all he could say: 'I have kept the faith.'

Stopford Brooke has described Frederick Robertson's natural morbidness, but has added: 'He could never have been entirely free from it unless he had been a soldier in constant warfare. But here, where his greatest weakness lay, appeared his greatest strength. . . . He transmuted the dross of his nature into gold by the alchemy of Christian effort.'

**Sixth Day.**—*Acts xxviii.* 16-24.

Note the patience with which Paul tells once again 'the old, old story' of Jesus. He was practising what he enjoined Timothy to do (2 Tim. iv. 2). Again and again he had met with disappointment and failure as he had expounded his gospel to Jewish hearers. But for the objections of his own countrymen he would have been released, and there would have been no galling 'chain.' Yet with rare patience he began afresh, and he was justified, for some were convinced



by what he said. Washington Gladden's prayer should ever be on our lips :

Teach me Thy patience ; still with Thee  
In closer, dearer company,  
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,  
In trust that triumphs over wrong,  
In hope that sends a shining ray  
Far down the future's broadening way,  
In peace that only Thou canst give,  
With Thee, O Master, let me live !

## SUMMARY

Paul was an apt scholar in the school of patience, but the lessons were not easy. His impetuous temperament required constant watchfulness, and even his intense desire for the swift advancement of the Kingdom of God contained its dangerous elements. There are glimpses of what he was fighting, and at rare intervals the overbrimming torrent of lava revealed the force of the secret fires. Barnabas, soul of patience, was ready to overlook John Mark's previous defection and to give him another chance. But Paul, blazing with ardour for the spread of the gospel, was impatient. In his judgement, Mark was untrustworthy, and so we have the sorry story of the conflict and separation of the two men who had shared in the trials and triumphs of the first missionary campaign (Acts xv. 39, 40). No, patience did not come easily to the great apostle, yet he was rarely ruffled. Like a hero he bore the disability caused by the thorn in the flesh. He was like the wounded soldier of whom a V.A.D. worker has told in *The Army and Religion*, 'who revealed in delirium that his only thought was for courage and dignity in pain. "I've stood it wi' patience."' "

He told the Corinthians not to murmur (1 Cor. x. 10), and he practised what he preached, turning his gaze from the present trial to the future glory (2 Cor. iv. 17).

He prayed that the restless Thessalonians might learn the secret of Christ's patience (2 Thess. iii. 5). That revealed the source of his own endurance. 'Jesus's courageous patience with undesirable situations, and with the necessity of suffering, sprang from his absolute trust in the good purpose of God. His task was to do the will of God for Him; the

consequences were God's responsibility, and God would not fail to bring a worthy issue to all faithful work. Therefore the Master suffered patiently, endured courageously, sacrificed freely, laboured hopefully, for He was sure that God was for Him, and that no one ultimately could prevail against Him' (Dr. H. E. Fosdick). Paul bade the litigious Corinthians suffer wrong (1 Cor. vi. 7). He urged the Roman Christians to endure (Rom. xii. 11, 13), and never to take revenge (Rom. xii. 17-21). He enjoined Titus to see that his flock in Crete showed forbearance and patience (Titus iii. 2, 3).

He himself had undergone a great transformation. Saul at the outset was narrow, bitter, and intolerant, and then, after he had met Jesus, he quenched the flaming fires of impatience, became broad in outlook, rich in sympathy, ready to endure for the sake of those he had won for his Master, who were often most difficult. Yet Paul, with his large heart, found a golden opportunity in every chance of winning the slow, prejudiced, and stupid. He recalled his own life-story, and therefore he never could forget that he himself once 'acted out of ignorance.'

Emerson's lines are noteworthy, for they are charged with Paul's spirit :

Life is too short to waste  
In critic peep or cynic bark,  
Quarrel or reprimand ;  
'Twill soon be dark.  
Up ! mind thine own aim, and  
God speed the mark !

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. 'Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair.' Is that true patience, or its travesty?
2. Jowett of Balliol said, 'I have, as you know, a general prejudice against all persons who do not succeed in the world.' How would Paul deal with that dictum?
3. Collect the references to patience in the Book of Revelation and appraise Paul's life in their light.
4. How would you express the difference between Mohammedan kismet and Christian patience?

## PAUL'S GRATITUDE



STUDY V

PAUL'S GRATITUDE

DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—2 *Tim. i.* 16-18 ; *Rom. xvi.* 1-4.

Those who had ministered to Paul himself, or gladdened his heart by their keenness for the great cause, were never forgotten. He thankfully remembered one who had braced him up, another who had nursed him, others who had risked their lives for him, a Mary who had worked hard, and another who had given him hospitality. Toils and perils, anxieties and defections, could not shut out the recollection of deeds of week-day holiness, of gifts of cups of cold water because he belonged to Christ. He was like Wordsworth's old huntsman, Simon Lee :

The tears into his eyes were brought,  
And thanks and praises seemed to run  
So fast out of his heart, I thought  
They never would have done.

Joseph predicted the release and restoration to royal favour of Pharaoh's chief butler, and added, ' Have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee.' Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him. Is your memory like the butler's or like Paul's ?

**Second Day.**—*Phil. iv.* 10-18.

' A few sentences which only a gentleman could have written—a rare blending of gratitude, dignity, and humour ' (Professor David Smith). He lightly brushed

aside their apparent neglect. They had lacked the opportunity of showing their affection, but he had never misunderstood. He had learned how to live in want, yet he was glad of their gift, not so much because it eased the situation, as because it was the outward and visible sign of their affectionate remembrance of him. Theirs was a sanctified gift—‘a fragrant perfume.’

Paul had the grace of true gratitude, not measuring and weighing, but, like his Lord, piercing to the heart of the giver and gladdened by the generosity and love which he discovered there.

**Third Day.**—*Rom. xii. 1 ; Col. ii. 6, 7, iii. 16, 17.*

Note Paul’s wellspring of thanksgiving. He dwelt continually on the mercies of God that were all amazing to him. He never regarded the divine gifts as commonplace. To him the Cross was always wondrous, and his Master’s Name made continual music in his ears.

Keats mourned :

There was an awful rainbow once in heaven,  
We know her woof, her texture, she is given  
In the dull catalogue of common things.

Paul knew nothing of dull catalogues. Like the cleansed Samaritan leper he ‘returned and gave glory to God.’

**Fourth Day.**—*Rom. i. 8 ; Col. i. 3, 4 ; Phil. i. 3-5 ; 2 Thess. i. 3.*

Paul’s was not a parochial soul. He remembered not only blessings that had come to him, but he rejoiced with thanksgiving as he recalled men and women everywhere who were spreading the radiance of Jesus. He had the catholic spirit and was grateful for every follower of his Lord. Lord Fisher reminded us that ‘Dean Swift satirized the vulgar exclusiveness of those who desired the infinite meadows of Heaven



only to be frequented by the religious sect they adorned on earth :

We are God's chosen few !  
 All others will be damned.  
 There is no place in Heaven for you,  
 We can't have Heaven crammed.'

The dean's satire seems extreme, but do we really believe in the fellowship of saints, the abiding brotherhood of man ?

**Fifth Day.**—*Col. i. 11-13 ; 1 Thess. v. 18 ; Eph. v. 20 ; 1 Tim. i. 12, 13.*

Robert Louis Stevenson, broken though he was, and exiled, could pray : ' We thank Thee, Lord, for the glory of the late days, and the excellent face of Thy sun. We thank Thee for good news received. We thank Thee for the pleasures we have enjoyed, and for those we have been able to confer. And now, when the clouds gather and the rain impends over our house and our forest, permit us not to be cast down ; let us not lose the savour of past mercies and past pleasures, but, like the voice of a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memory survive in the hour of darkness.'

But Paul's hold was still surer. He could give thanks even for gathering cloud and impending rain.

Adelaide Procter sang thankfully of splendour and joy, beauty and light, and then she added :

I thank Thee more that all our joy  
 Is touched with pain,  
 That shadows fall on brightest hours,  
 That thorns remain,  
 So that earth's bliss may be our guide,  
 And not our chain.

Paul had learned that lesson and gained that rich experience.

**Sixth Day.**—*Col. iv. 2 ; Phil. iv. 6 ; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 3.*

Many regard prayer as consisting simply of supplication and intercession. John Wesley wrote in his *Journal*, Tuesday, July 24, 1755 : ' Observing in that valuable book, Mr. Gillies's *Historical Collections*, the custom of Christian congregations in all ages to set apart seasons of solemn thanksgivings, I was amazed and ashamed that we had never done this, after all the blessings we had received, and many to whom I mentioned it gladly agreed to set apart a day for that purpose.'

But Paul would have his converts go even further and continually blend prayer and praise. He knew that quiet meditation on God's goodness stays and fortifies the soul.

John Newton exclaimed—and the value of the spirit atones for the poverty of the letter ; it is religion if it is not art :

His love in time past forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink ;  
While each Ebenezer I have in review  
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through.

Thanksgiving leads the soul into deeper dependence upon the Giver of every good gift and every perfect boon.

## SUMMARY

'The world,' says Jean Jardine, in *Penny Plain*, 'is divided into two classes, the givers and the takers. Nothing so touches and pleases a "giver" as to receive a gift. The "takers" are too busy standing on their hind legs (like a dog at tea-time) looking wistfully for the next bit of cake to be very appreciative of the biscuit of the moment.'

Paul was such a sacrificial giver that his heart bounded with delight whenever he became a 'taker,' and he was filled with gratitude. He never forgot those who had helped him. His was a life of almost ceaseless movement; he faced situations that demanded all his thought, courage, and resource, but he never became self-centred. He knew how to give thanks, and in his heart the bells of memory rang their silver chime long after the shining deed had been performed or the gracious help given. Euodia and Syntyche had disagreed, but Paul remembered their past services, and, in his expression of his desire for their reconciliation, his gratitude shone out (Phil. iv. 3).

Romans xvi. bears undying witness to his thankful heart. Though he sternly rebuked the Galatians, he recalled with gratitude their reception of him (Gal. iv. 14, 15).

His letter to the Philippians radiated thankfulness. He had met with discouragement, but they had cheered him by their remembrance of him. They had more than paid their debt to him. He remembered the unselfishness of Timothy, the exertions of Epaphras, the loyalty of Tychicus, of Aristarchus, of Mark—once the renegade, but now the comforter—and of Jesus Justus (Col. iv.).

He wished others to share his spirit of appreciation

(1 Cor. xvi. 17, 18 ; Phil. ii. 29, 30 ; 2 Cor. viii. 16-18, 22-4).

His message to the peasants of Lystra was of God the bountiful donor of food and gladness (Acts xiv. 17).

On the storm-swept ship he gave thanks because there was bread (Acts xxvii. 33-5).

‘ Even when he speaks of food, the name which he employs is that for which I give thanks ’ (Howson).

Horace Walpole wrote from Rome on April 16, 1740 ; ‘ I’ll tell you, West, because one is amongst new things you think one can always write new things. When I first came abroad, everything struck me, and I wrote its history ; but now I am grown so used to be surprised that I don’t perceive any flutter in myself when I meet with any novelties ; curiosity and astonishment wear off.’

Paul’s astonishment never wore off. His mercies, like the Psalmist’s, were new every morning. He never failed to bless his Father for his ‘ creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life.’

His doxologies are characteristic. ‘ Paul was a great hand at numbering up his friends, and so great was the company that he always felt his side was overwhelming. He periodically reviews the co-operative forces, and invariably marches on with a more impassioned Doxology ’ (J. H. Jowett).

Consider the spirit of Rom. vii. 25, xi. 33, 36 ; Phil. iv. 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57 ; 2 Cor. viii. 9, ix. 15.

Paul had such a due sense of all God’s mercies that he showed forth His praise, not only with his lips, but in his life—the only true way of gratitude.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Collect Paul's reasons for thanksgiving stated at the opening of his various letters.
2.               Now thank we all our God,  
                  With hearts and hands and voices.  
How did Paul do that?
3.               We thank Thee, then, O Father,  
                  For all things bright and good.  
Would Paul have expressed it quite like that?
4. 'In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus' (1 Thess. v. 18). Is that really God's will, or is it a counsel of perfection? Did Paul practise his own precept?



## PAUL'S OPTIMISM





## STUDY VI

### PAUL'S OPTIMISM

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—*Acts xxvii.* 21-25. *Rom. xv.* 13:

Consider Paul's situation. He had seen his prudent counsel disregarded, and he must have feared a fatal ending to so hazardous a voyage. Depressing doubts as to the expediency of his appeal to Caesar must have crossed his mind. Luke has thus pictured the gravity of the position: for many days neither sun nor stars could be seen, the storm raged heavily, and at last we had to give up all hope of being saved (*Acts xxvii.* 20).

Recall Gordon's last letter, dated December 14, 1884: 'This may be the last letter you will receive from me, for we are on our last legs, owing to the delay of the expedition. However, God rules all, and, as He will rule to His glory and our welfare, His will be done. . . . P.S.—I am quite happy, thank God, and, like Lawrence, I have "tried to do my duty."'

**Second Day.**—*Rom. viii.* 18-25.

Paul's endurance was born of his confidence in the final triumph of goodness. He was sure of the future, and therefore could bear with fortitude all the sorrows and buffetings of the present. He was one of 'a colony of heaven,' and, as a true colonist, his eyes were often turned towards home. His windows were open toward the New Jerusalem. Demas, 'having loved this present world,' lost his sense of perspective and abandoned the toils and perils of the pilgrim's road. The 'glory that we are to have revealed' so entranced

Paul that he was able to forget his griefs as he journeyed onward. His dreams did not enervate him; they strengthened him. An older generation was reproached for being 'other-worldly,' but has not the pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction? Consider how much less you would be affected by adversity and disappointment if you lifted up your eyes to the hills of Heaven and viewed life *sub specie aeternitatis*.

**Third Day.**—I *Tim. iv.* 8-10; *Eph. i.* 17-20.

Paul was always hopeful, because he realized that God was no aloof deity, throned in some far-off splendour, but alive to every cry of distress and each unutterable need in this shadowed world. His was the spirit of Elisha, who in Dothan pierced with the eye of faith through the host of horses and chariots ringed about the city with deadly intent, and saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire; of young Isaiah, who, in the year that King Uzziah died, and his soul was filled with an oppressive sense of the frailty of human life and the instability of that which he had hitherto regarded as the stable, 'saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.' 'We fight too much as soldiers whose leader is out of the field. We work too much as though our Exemplar were a dead Nazarene, instead of a living and immediate Friend. We tear about with the aimless, pathetic wanderings of little chicks when the mother-bird is away' (J. H. Jowett).

**Fourth Day.**—I *Cor. vi.* 9-11; *Eph. iv.* 28, 29.

Paul read the future in the light of the past and therefore believed that no man was hopeless.

Consider the moving, modern story of Tokichi Ishii. A lifelong criminal, he voluntarily confessed that he had committed a murder for which an innocent

man was about to be condemned. Two English ladies visited him in the jail at Tokyo where he lay awaiting execution. They were the only Christians he had ever met. They left him a copy of the New Testament. He read it, and wrote: 'My attention was taken by the words, "And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."' I stopped. I was stabbed to the heart as if pierced by a five-inch nail. What did the verse reveal to me? Shall I call it the love of the heart of Christ? Shall I call it His compassion? I do not know what to call it. I only know that, with an unspeakably grateful heart, I believed. Through this simple sentence I was led into the whole of Christianity.'

As Miss Macdonald saw him for the last time, 'his eyes were glowing with joy—there shone in his face that light which was the wonder of the prison officials.' His last words were, 'My soul, purified, to-day returns to the City of God.'

**Fifth Day.**—*Rom. iv. 18-22 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 7.*

Abraham was Paul's national hero, and Paul had caught his hero's spirit of quenchless optimism. True optimism is never in the clouds, for it is the child of love, and leads to the practical. 'To have faith,' declared the Roadmender, 'is to create.' The optimist does become the father of many nations. He assails the impregnable, dares the unknown, and achieves the impossible. Dr. Jowett has told of an epitaph which he saw on a woman's grave in New England: 'She hath done what she couldn't!' Centuries before Professor Coué the great souls of the New Testament preached and practised hope. Hope's shining ray beckoned Paul to Europe, Judson to Burma, Calvert to Fiji, Gilmour to Mongolia, and David Hill to China. Too often the modern pilgrim's

progress resembles that to which Hilaire Belloc has likened 'those conferences to which the Parliamentarians of various countries travel at our expense from time to time, and are there delivered of heavy speeches without meaning, which make one think of a corpulent elderly man groaning across a ploughed clay field after a week's rain in the dark of the moon.'

**Sixth Day.**—*Rom. vii. 7-11, 21-5.*

Paul had passed through deep, dark waters, but a divine hand had set his feet upon the rock. He told Timothy in his farewell letter of his assurance, 'I know whom I have trusted' (2 Tim. i. 12). His own experience filled his soul with the radiance of hope. That which God had done for him He was willing to do for every man.

What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholden  
Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope?  
What but look sunward, and with faces golden  
Speak to each other softly of a hope?

Can it be true the grace he is declaring?  
Oh, let us trust him, for his words are fair!  
Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?  
God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

## SUMMARY

Paul believed in the infinite possibilities of every human being. In *The Battle of Life*, Dickens preached a gospel akin to Paul's: 'I believe there are quiet victories and struggles, great sacrifices of self, and noble acts of heroism in it—even in many of its apparent lightnesses and contradictions—not the less difficult to achieve because they have no earthly chronicle or audience—done in everyday nooks and corners, and in little households, and in men's and women's hearts—any one of which might reconcile the sternest man to such a world, and fill him with belief and hope in it, though two-fourths of its people were at war, and another fourth at law; and that's a bold word.'

The Galatians had been bewitched and had sorely disappointed Paul, yet he wrote hopefully (Gal. v. 10). The Corinthians were crude and factious, but he declared his confidence in them (2 Cor. vii. 4). He was sure of the progress of the Christians of Philippi (Phil. i. 6). Onesimus, the unprofitable, was, in his view, bound to turn out profitable.

He was buoyant in an age of corruption, the darkness of which he never ignored. Dr. Stalker has drawn a vivid picture of a Pauline congregation: 'Look at that tall, sallow-faced Greek; he has wallowed in the mire of Circe's swine-pens. Look at that low-browed Scythian slave; he has been a pickpocket and a jail-bird. Look at that thin-nosed, sharp-eyed Jew; he has been a Shylock, cutting his pound of flesh from the gilded youth of Corinth. Yet there has been a great change. Another story besides the tale of sin is written on these countenances. . . . They know themselves to be the monuments of free grace and dying love.'

The Ephesian Christians had been led from darkness to light (Eph. v. 8), and the Colossians had been raised from awful depths (Col. iii. 8-10).

He never forgot God's supreme mercy to him (1 Tim. i. 13; Titus iii. 3-5; 2 Cor. iv. 1).

He believed in the closeness and intimacy of a divine Friend (Phil. iv. 19; Col. i. 25-7; Rom. viii. 31-9).

For him the future held no terrors, for all was in the hands of a tender Father who would make no mistakes, but would always hold His child in the strong embrace of a love that would never let him go (2 Cor. iv. 14, v. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 19-21; Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 14).

As life's sun began to sink, the dauntless prisoner was still

Strong  
In the endurance which outwearies wrong,  
With meek persistence baffling brutal force,  
And trusting God against the universe.

Clouds and darkness were round about him, but in his heart there burned the unquenchable lamp of hope, and his closing words in his last known letter ring out with undimmed assurance; 'The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom' (2 Tim. iv. 18).

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. 'Youth is an illusion, manhood a struggle, old age a regret.' Reply to this cheap cynicism of Disraeli's with some of Paul's epigrams.
2. 'I am proud of the gospel; it is God's saving power.' (Mrs. Bat's-eyes gives a sniff of contempt!) Prove your contention that Paul's testimony is still true by modern instances from (a) The Mission Field. (b) Your own experience.
3. 'Christ of all my hopes the ground.' Give four quotations from Paul to prove that this expresses his mind and heart.
4. 'There is a happy land, far, far away.' Expound this, and correct or justify its statement.





## PAUL'S FRIENDSHIP



## STUDY VII

### PAUL'S FRIENDSHIP

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—2 *Tim. iv.* 6, 9-12, 21.

'It is with an ever-deepening sense of wonder we find, as we study his life, that the man lives in the apostle—that none of the most refined fears, cares, joys, cravings, tendernesses of the most passionate human friendships are unknown to him. Nothing indeed, in the whole range of his writings, is more striking or more pathetic than the friendly phrases which constantly recur, and which breathe the very spirit of tender yearning and desire. As we accumulate such phrases as "Only Luke is with me," "No man stood by me," "I thought it good to be left at Athens alone," and "I have no man likeminded with him," we feel that we are permitted to look into the most sensitive of human hearts, a heart ever craving sympathy and love' (Samuel Cox). Contemplate that picture and recall John Stuart Blackie's words: 'Love as many persons and as many creatures as you possibly can. Love is the only power by which you can make yourself rich in a moral world.'

**Second Day.**—*Acts xxviii.* 13-15; *Col. iv.* 10, 11.

Paul, 'lone on the land and homeless on the water,' felt the need of human sympathy and comfort. On the stormy voyage he had towered above all on board, and in Malta he had been declared a god and been presented with rich gifts. But the inner side of his nature shone out when he met the brethren who had come out to welcome him to Rome. At once he was cheered for

' His mind was like some instrument of music, harp or violin, the strings of which vibrate, though untouched, with the notes which other instruments give forth ' (J. H. Newman). Too often we forget that the leader needs the loyalty and the affection of those led. ' There is a remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews,' wrote Dr. George Matheson, ' in which it is stated that Jesus " suffered outside the camp." I take the idea to be that the trials of a captain are greater when they are unappreciated by the army—when they have to be borne in the silence of his own breast.' How often we grieve our Heavenly Captain by our failure to sustain His earthly captains !

**Third Day.**—*Phil. ii.* 19-22, 25-8; *I Thess. iii.* 1-3; *Philem.* 12.

Already we have noted Paul's craving for sympathy and fellowship. To-day we see how utterly that was subordinated to the spirit of service. Try to imagine what it cost Paul to part with the men about whom we have just read. Picture the awful solitude in which he found himself in Athens, and the weariness of the long imprisonment at Rome. Paul knew that love always puts first the interests of others. Thomas à Kempis wrote : ' He doeth much that loveth much. He doeth much that doeth a thing well. He doeth well that serveth the community rather than his own will.'

**Fourth Day.**—*Rom. i.* 11, 12; *I Cor. iv.* 14-16; *2 Cor. ii.* 4.

Note the quality of Paul's friendship. Degeneration pained him, and growth in the things of the spirit caused him to rejoice. He longed to give his friends the choicest gifts, and he wanted in return to receive the best from them. ' His heart was large enough to hold many friends, and while he loved them, and that most tenderly for their own sakes, he loved them most

of all because their friendship made God's friendship more real to him, because their love brought home to him the love of God. Only the love of good men could do that. And hence in the whole circle of his personal friends we find none but good men—none of his Hebrew or Greek fellow students who had rejected the gospel, for example, but only men and women who, if not eminent in capacities and gifts, loved Christ and gave themselves to the service of man' (Samuel Cox).

Do we apply such a test in our friendships?

**Fifth Day.**—1 *Thess. ii. 7, 8, 11*; 2 *Tim. iii. 10*.

To-day's reading throws a vivid and suggestive light upon the causes of Paul's successful labours. His friendship was worthy of being expressed in terms of motherhood and fatherhood. In bidding farewell to Timothy, he recalled the clouds and sunshine, but his love had shone through it all. His preaching had been powerful because yearning, passionate and eager, had winged his words.

What was their sweet desire and subtle yearning,  
Lovers, and women whom their song enrols?  
Faint to the flame which in my breast is burning,  
Less than the love wherewith I ache for souls.

Paul's ministry had been magnetic, because it was 'rooted and grounded in love.' Christian witness often fails because it is simply argumentative; 'icily regular,' and therefore, 'splendidly null.' Paul imparted his own soul with his words. There was no reservation in his offering. He moved men because he first loved them.

**Sixth Day.**—*Rom. viii. 35-9*; 2 *Cor. v. 14*; *Gal. ii. 20*.

Paul's earthly friendships, warm and tender though they were, reflected his great love for his divine Friend.

He longed to know Him more and more. He must eagerly have sought out those who had companied with Jesus in the days of His flesh, and earnestly and repeatedly have questioned them about His words and deeds, His very looks and gestures. Speaking of Andronicus and Junias, he added regretfully, 'they have been in Christ longer than I have.'

But above all he sought the mystic companionship of one who was no dead Nazarene, but a living Friend.

'His personal religion was, in essence, a pure mysticism; he worships a Christ whom he has experienced as a living presence in his soul. The mystic who is also a man of action, and a man of action because he is a mystic, wields a tremendous power over other men. He is like an invulnerable knight, fighting in magic armour' (Dean Inge).

## SUMMARY

J. H. Newman wrote of Paul : ' He had a thousand friends, and loved each as his own soul, and seemed to live a thousand lives in them, and die a thousand deaths when he must quit them.' He sent discriminating messages to the obscure individuals who composed the little church at Rome (Rom. xvi.), having declared his great desire to visit them (Rom. i. 11).

In solitude his spirits sometimes drooped, but the fellowship of kindred souls always encouraged and strengthened him (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13).

He was reluctant to part with Onesimus, but he looked forward to seeing both him and his master later (Philem. 22).

He urged Titus to join him at Nicopolis for the winter (Titus iii. 12), and in his last letter he told Timothy how he longed to see him again (2 Tim. i. 4, 5). He was thankful for Onesiphorus, who came when others had failed him (2 Tim. i. 16, 17).

He had a heart of love even for the unthankful and the disappointing (2 Cor. vi. 11, 13, vii. 2).

As Dr. R. D. Shaw has well said : ' The secret of Paul's success . . . did not lie so much in his masterly generalship of the Churches, as in his devoted love to individual souls. It was by his affectionate personal interest that he undoubtedly obtained his singular hold upon men. Wherever he went hearts responded to this winsome attachment. The sunshine of his solicitude seemed to focus itself on each single life, and to make that life its peculiar care.'

So perfect was his sympathy that he was interested even in those whom he had never seen (Col. ii. 1-5), and as he thought of men and women who had missed the friendship of Jesus, he was filled with sorrow (Phil. iii. 18).

His supreme desire for his friends was the perfecting of their Christian character. Mark the quality and the discrimination of his prayers for his friends (Phil. i. 9-11; Eph. iii. 14-19; 2 Thess. i. 11, 12; Philem. 4-6).

His utter selflessness lights up his letter to the Philippians with golden gleams. They were absent from him in the body, but they were ever present in his mind and soul. He was eager to go Home to his Master, but his own wishes were subordinated to the welfare of those whom he loved (Phil. i. 23-5). That unselfish note is characteristic (2 Cor. i. 5, 6). The mob had forced him to leave Thessalonica, yet for the sake of his children in Christ he would fain return (1 Thess. iii. 10-12).

He could put himself with ease into another's place, enter into his feelings, and see with his eyes (2 Cor. xi. 29).

Stopford Brooke's words concerning Frederick Robertson might well be used of Paul: 'With those who were weak, crushed with remorse, fallen, his compassion, longsuffering, and tenderness were as beautiful as they were unfailing. But falsehood, hypocrisy, the sin of the strong against the weak, stirred him to the very depths of his being. "I have seen him," writes one of his friends, "grind his teeth and clench his fists when passing a man, who, he knew, was bent on destroying an innocent girl." "My blood," he writes himself, after a conversation on the wrongs of women, "was running liquid fire."'

It was in such a spirit that Paul bade the Galatians bear one another's burdens. He knew that self and Jesus could never dwell in the same heart and life.

As a friend of Jesus, Paul had learned the true art of affection. It was possible for him to pen the noblest ideal of friendship, when, describing his love for the



Philippian Christians, he declared that his love was so rich that it was not simply Paul who cared for them, but it was Jesus Himself loving them through him. In the Manual of Fellowship we have this suggestive rendering of Phil. i. 8 ; ' God is my witness how I long for you all with a love that is not mine, but Christ loving in me.'

Therefore to him it was given  
Many to save with himself.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. How would you define the essentials of true friendship?
2. Lamartine wrote, 'I see a friend in every prayerful soul.' Is that Pauline? Is it practicable?
3. Discuss the place of prayer in friendship.
4. How did Paul serve 'loved ones far away'?

## PAUL'S AMBITIONS



STUDY VIII  
PAUL'S AMBITIONS  
DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—1 *Cor. xii.* 4-11, 31.

'The gifts enumerated in this chapter as heavenly inspirations—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, powers, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues—suggest and represent those gifts of learning, insight, prescience, science, expression, and criticism bestowed on elect souls in all generations, and which in truth are not less miraculous than are the special faculties imparted to the primitive saints. Science, art, invention, discovery, the craftsman's skill, literature, music, poetry, language, philosophy, and all ability of practical and social life, are as truly and immediately inbreathings of the Spirit of God as were the singular gifts of Pentecost' (Dr. Watkinson). Paul declared that each talent was bestowed 'for the common good,' and urged its earnest and patient cultivation. Such a view sanctifies all life. Canon Ellerton has reminded us of this truth :

Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,  
The wealth of land and sea,  
The worlds of science and of art,  
Revealed and ruled by Thee.

**Second Day.**—2 *Cor. v.* 1-9.

Paul was 'other-worldly,' and therefore was always keenly interested in the life of the present world. Here he makes use of a tentmaker's analogy. His trade helped him in his illustrations! Prison, shipwreck, mobs, scourging, all failed to daunt him, because he never forgot that he was a colonist whose fatherland was heaven. He was intensely patriotic, and could share

Cicero's experience : ' Often and in many lands has the mere words, " I am a Roman citizen," brought help and security among foreigners.' But the apostle could go farther : ' You are strangers and foreigners no longer ; you share the membership of the saints ; you belong to God's own household.' Paul lifted up his eyes to the hills of heaven, and was thereby made strong to struggle on his toilsome road, even in the gloomy valley and the dreary plain. Atheist declared that there was no such place as Mount Zion, but Hopeful could reply, ' Did we not see from the Delectable Mountains the gate of the city ? ' But Paul was willing to wait his Master's time. His ambition in life or death was to satisfy his Lord.

**Third Day.**—*Rom. xv. 16-25.*

' Tradition even stretches his plans into Britain, the northern limit of the Empire ; but it is too uncertain to be used as evidence. He was, however, sending his subordinates as far as Gaul in his later years (if Tischendorf is right in accepting the reading of the Sinaitic Manuscript, " Gallia," in 2 Tim. iv. 10) ' (Ramsay). Examine Paul's journeyings with the help of a map, and recall how hazardous was travel in his day. In *The Sadhu*, Streeter and Appasamy thus have explained the missionary zeal of Sadhu Sundar Singh : ' The divine, apprehended in and as the Eternal Christ, elicits in him a passion and devotion not possible to the mystic to whose imagination absolute Reality takes on a less vividly concrete and personal form. That is why he is a missionary, although his own natural bent would be towards the hermit's life of contemplation in solitary mountain caves. The love of Christ constrains him.' Jesus asked Peter, ' Lovest thou Me more than these ? ' The love is to find its expression in service—' Feed ! '

**Fourth Day.**—1 *Tim. vi.* 6-10, 17-19.

To-day we are addressing ourselves with awakened consciences and inquiring minds to the problem of the right use of money. Verse 10 suffers frequently from half quotation. Paul never asserted that money was the root of all evil. It was love of money, aspiring to be rich, that led men astray. The fault lies, not in the money, but in its misuse. Wesley gave three excellent rules for the right use of money: Gain all you can; save all you can; give all you can. Paul declared that we are not owners, but stewards. John Galsworthy, in his *Forsyte Saga*, has skilfully shown the havoc wrought by those whose god is property. It was material interests that kept men away from the great feast in our Lord's parable. The man who leaves Lazarus untended at his gate will one day get his eyes opened 'in hell.' And we are learning to-day that Lazarus is a type, not only of the poor beggar, but of all who are ill paid and oppressed. Paul so wrote and preached that, though he never dealt with the economics of slavery, nor directly pleaded for its abolition, men came to discover the implications of his message, and slavery has gone. Consider the implications of his message for us in the twentieth century.

**Fifth Day.**—1 *Tim. iv.* 7-10; 1 *Cor. iii.* 18-23; *ix.* 24-7.

'Do you know, the more I look into life, the more things it seems to me I can successfully lack—and continue to grow happier. How many kinds of food I do not need, nor cooks to cook them; how much curious clothing, nor tailors to make it; how many books I never read, and pictures that are not worth while. The farther I run, the more I feel like casting aside all such impediments, lest I fail to arrive at the far goal of my endeavour. I like to think of an old

Japanese nobleman I once read about who ornamented his house with a single vase at a time, living with it, absorbing its message of beauty, and, when he tired of it, replacing it with another. I wonder if he had the right way, and we, with so many objects to hang on our walls, place on our shelves, drape on our chairs, and spread on our floors, have mistaken our course, and placed our hearts upon the multiplicity rather than the quality of our possessions' (David Grayson).

Consider the joy of the 'Varsity oar as he trains for the Boat Race; the keenness of the student bent on his degree; the ardour of the explorer. Paul had learned the true art of the specialist. He lived with one beautiful Object, of whom he never tired.

**Sixth Day.**—*Phil. iii. 7-16.*

Paul started out as a self-complacent Pharisee with all the assurance of youth. He had few ambitions, for he believed that he knew everything. The incident on the Damascus road, however, altered his outlook. The sublime appearing of the living Jesus, the One he had imagined lay dead and buried, the impostor of Galilee, first blinded him and then awakened him to reality. The first result was that 'he saw nothing,' but that enabled him to see everything. The words of Jesus to the cavilling Pharisees are full of significance. They declared that they could see, though they were truly blind, and so their sin remained. Bunyan has sketched Ignorance for us, 'a very brisk lad from the country of Conceit,' always so sure of himself, ferried over the dark river, which so sorely troubled Christian, by one Vain-Hope, a ferryman, but cast down from the gleaming gates of the City Celestial to the jaws of hell. Paul 'pressed'—suggestive word—towards the mark. Do we?



## SUMMARY

In her little book, *Concerning the Inner Life*, Evelyn Underhill has written : ' A shallow religiousness, the tendency to be content with a bright ethical piety wrongly called practical Christianity, a nice brightly-varnished this-world faith, seems to me to be one of the defects of institutional religion at the present time. We are drifting towards a religion which consciously or unconsciously keeps its eye on humanity rather than on Deity—which lays all the stress on service, and hardly any of the stress on awe ; and that is a type of religion which in practice does not wear well. It does little for the soul in those awful moments when the pain and mystery of life are most deeply felt. It does not provide a place for that profound experience which Tauler called " suffering in God." It does not lead to sanctity ; and sanctity, after all, is the religious goal.'

But Paul's greatest ambition was to please his Master. That is the clue to his amazing loyalties and to his tireless toil. He delighted to style himself ' bondservant.' That word, in itself so grim, had for him a sweet savour and a sound of song.

How sweetly doth ' My Master ' sound. ' My Master.'  
As ambergris leaves a rich scent  
Unto the taster,  
So doth these words a sweet content,  
An Oriental fragrancy, ' My Master.'

Paul might have written those lines of George Herbert A Hebrew of the Hebrews, he could take the familiar words of the Book of Exodus and fill them with mystic meaning : ' I love my Master, I love His house, I love His service, I will not go free, I will serve Him for ever.'

Though with eager longing he looked forward to release from toil and discharge from warfare, he gladly left all in the strong, sure hands of his Lord, his great desire being to do His pleasure. He could truly say, with Zinzendorf, 'I have one enthusiasm, one only—it is He.'

But Paul was saved from the perils of a merely contemplative life by another ambition. He was afire to spread the good news. That which he had discovered in solitude he needs must pass on to society. His quest impelled him to crusade. Myers has well expressed his spirit :

Hearts I have won of sister or of brother  
Quick on the earth or hidden in the sod,  
Lo, every heart awaiteth me, another  
Friend in the blameless family of God.

What was their sweet desire and subtle yearning,  
Lovers, and women whom their song enrols ?  
Faint to the flame which in my breast is burning,  
Less than the love wherewith I ache for souls.

His lot was cast in a world torn and wearied, and his great ambition was to preach Jesus the Healer and Saviour. He longed to see Him Lord of all. Roman roads, Roman ships, the ordered governance of her great Empire, were to him means ordained by God for the spread of the gospel. He would have gloried in the girdling of the earth to-day. Every scientific advance would have meant for him a challenge to evangelize the world in this generation.

Ian Maclaren once said that the finest peroration to any sermon he had heard was that of a Shropshire labourer, who, at the close of his simple and moving address, cried, 'Friends, you may wonder why I am here to preach when, after a hard week, I might well

have rested. 'This is the reason—I cannot eat my bread alone.'

Paul had fed on the Bread of Life in his heart by faith with thanksgiving, and he could not keep that Bread to himself when he saw the hungry and worried men and women concerning whom his Master had given this command: 'Give ye them to eat.'

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Paul was a tentmaker. Do you think that he was ambitious to become a master of his craft? If so, why?
2. Paul spoke of being 'set apart for good work of all kinds.' Men are spoken of as 'set apart' for the work of the Christian ministry. Do you think Paul would amplify that? Discuss what we mean by 'vocation.'
3. Compose a letter from Paul to a man who does not believe in Foreign Missions.
4. How would Paul deal with the problem of holding young people? Test the value of the methods employed by your own Church in the light of your findings.

PAUL'S HUMILITY



## STUDY IX

### PAUL'S HUMILITY

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—1 *Cor. xv. 9, 10* ; *Eph. iii. 7, 8* ; 2 *Cor. xii. 7-10*.

Paul towers above average humanity. Yet he regarded himself as 'the very least of the apostles,' and 'less than the least of all saints.' Recall Bunyan's description of the Valley of Humiliation :

'It is the most fruitful piece of ground in all these parts. It is fat ground, and, as you see, consisteth much in meadows ; and if a man was to come here in summer-time, as we do now, if he knew not anything before thereof . . . he might see that which would be delightful to him. . . . In this valley our Lord formerly had his country house ; he loved much to be here. . . . In this place, and to the people that love and trace these grounds, he has left a yearly revenue to be faithfully paid them at certain seasons for their maintenance by the way.'

**Second Day.**—1 *Tim. i. 12-16*.

There is an entire absence of 'side' in Paul. Paul talked to the much younger Timothy without the slightest patronage. His reminiscences were not of his own genius and exploits ; he recalled the wonder of the grace that had stooped to rescue such an one as he (2 *Tim. i. 9*). Note how in the openings of his letters he linked the young man with himself whenever he could. Thurston Hopkins wrote of George Borrow : 'He crossed out the word commonplace from his dictionary. The gipsy, the prize-fighter, the tramp,

and the outcast, were not common to him ; they were the persistent repetition of God's miracles.'

Paul went farther. He found contact with all men because he regarded himself as one of God's miracles.

**Third Day.**—1 *Cor. iii.* 5-7, *iv.* 7, *xiii.* 12 ; 2 *Cor. iii.* 5.

George Eliot made Stradivarius cry,

When any master holds  
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,  
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,  
Made violins, and made them of the best.  
The masters only know whose work is good :  
They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill  
I give them instruments to play upon,  
God choosing me to help Him.

'What ! were God  
At fault for violins, thou absent ? '

'Yes ;  
He were at fault for Stradivari's work.'

Amiel wrote : ' I realize with intensity that man in all that he does that is great and noble is only the organ of something or someone higher than himself.'

These two truths are complementary. On which did Paul lay greater emphasis, and on which do we ?

**Fourth Day.**—*Col iii.* 12 ; 1 *Cor. xiii.* 4 ; *Rom. xii.* 3.

In his letter to Gaius, John painted the ignorant and self-assertive Diotrophes. Paul had met such and warned Titus against them (*Titus i.* 10). That spirit makes fellowship impossible either with God or man.

Forbes Robinson wrote : ' I don't think we always realize the " transvaluation of values " found in Christ's teaching : " Blessed are the poor—the hungry. He that would save his life shall lose it. He that loseth saveth. He that would be greatest shall be least. It is more blessed to give than to receive." As I think



over such statements as these, I find that I have again and again to revise, as it were, my moral arithmetic—to change my standards, to revise my ideas of great and little, happiness and misery, importance and insignificance.'

**Fifth Day.**—*Gal. v. 25, 26 ; 2 Tim. ii. 23-6.*

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: 'I was delighted to hear the good news of ——. Bravo, he goes uphill fast. Let him beware of vanity and he will go higher; let him still be discontented, and let him (if it might be) see the merits and not the faults of his rivals, and he may swarm at last to the top-gallant. There is no other way. Admiration is the only road to excellence, and the critical spirit kills.'

'Vain Confidence,' wrote Bunyan, 'not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep pit which was on purpose made there to catch vainglorious fools withal, and was dashed in pieces with his fall.'

In *The Stories of the Kingdom*, G. R. Holt Shafto has written, 'In the prayer-stories of Jesus there is only one character whose prayer is unheard. It is the Pharisee whose self-congratulatory utterances do not reach beyond himself. God does not heed him because his prayer is really prayer to himself and not to God. . . . Self-esteem casts men down from God's fellowship, self-humiliation lifts them up to Him.'

**Sixth Day.**—*Acts xx. 17-19 ; Rom. xii. 16, xvi. 7 ; Phil. ii. 1-4.*

Shrewd Samuel Butler wrote:

All smat'ers are more brisk and pert  
Than those that understand an art;  
As little sparkles shine more bright  
Than glowing coals that give them light.

Paul's claim to having served the Lord 'with all

lowliness of mind ' was advanced before men who knew him well, and who had proved the genuineness of such a claim. He was always ready to mix with humble folk, as his letters bear witness. Andronicus and Junias would have been forgotten but for Paul, who regarded them as ' of note,' and added remorsefully, they ' have been in Christ before me.' He felt that these humble saints were more experienced than he in the Christian life. Paul Gerhardt's prayer breathes Paul's spirit :

O that I, as a little child,  
May follow Thee, and never rest  
Till sweetly Thou hast breathed Thy mild  
And lowly mind into my breast !  
Nor ever may we parted be,  
Till I become one spirit with Thee.

## SUMMARY

There is a superficial view of the apostle which regards him as a braggart. His 'boasting' to the Corinthian Church is adduced as a proof. But a thoughtful study of the situation is enlightening. His attitude was assumed with reluctance, and was simply a vindication of the reality of his apostleship, not of its quality. He declared again and again that in thus speaking he was assuming the rôle of a fool (2 Cor. xi. 1, 17, 21, 23, xii. 1, 11).

These repeated asides show plainly that such words were distasteful to Paul. It was for the sake of the truth and for the sake of the imperilled safety of the Corinthian Church that he used so unwelcome and unaccustomed a weapon. His only boast was in the Cross (Gal vi. 14).

The 'aches of shame' for the early days, when he harried the followers of Jesus, and shared in the stoning of the sainted Stephen, were always with him to keep him abased.

Myers has thus truly expressed his mind :

Also I ask, but ever from the praying  
Shrinks my soul backward, eager and afraid,  
Point me the sum and shame of my betraying,  
Show me, O Love, thy wounds which I have made.

That is the experience of all true saints. The man of low standard soon becomes self-complacent. The ignorant are always glib. Donald Hankey wrote : 'It has often appeared to me that among ordinary working men humility was considered the Christian virtue par excellence.'

Paul had learned to treat men in his Master's spirit (Phil. ii. 5-8), for he had taken His yoke upon him, and so had become meek and lowly in heart. That

was not easy. His was the Pharisaic training, and the Gospels show us the hauteur and self-assertion of that school. Moreover he had come into close contact with the Greek world, and knew its doctrine of self-sufficiency, but now he sat at the feet of Jesus. He emphasized the necessity of the team spirit (1 Cor. iii. 8, 9, x. 32-xi. 1, xii. 18-27). But his chief incentive to humility was his never-failing recollection that he owed everything to God. Man's dependence upon the divine is one of the themes which recurs throughout his letters (Rom. iii. 27, viii. 26, xv. 17; 1 Cor. i. 26-31). Even his ill health, his anxieties, and all the perils of his life were but to prove the power of God in so amazingly using such a frail earthen vessel (2 Cor. iv. 7).

The greatness of God was ever before the apostle's mind, and the result was that he saw man's constant need of true humility, 'For we are His workmanship,' he reminded the Ephesians (Eph. ii. 10).

Huxley wrote: 'Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses Nature leads, or you shall learn nothing.' Paul had sat down humbly, not before a fact, but before a Person, and, having learned so much, he had learned how much more remained to be known.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. 'Humility,' wrote Professor Sidgwick, ' . . . is an essential condition of all truly Christian goodness.' Discuss this.
2. Mention some of the revenues (see First Day) faithfully paid by the Lord to those who love the Valley of Humiliation.
3. Did Paul do right to 'boast'?
4.                      Oh, to be nothing, nothing !  
                         Only to lie at His feet !  
How would Paul treat those lines ?



PAUL'S DEVOTION





## STUDY X

### PAUL'S DEVOTION

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**— *Acts vii. 58–viii. 3 ; Rom. x. 2.*

Paul had an ardent spirit, even in his early days, but his devotion was tragically misdirected. To have a hand in the murder of the renegade Stephen and to imprison perverts from the old religion gave him sinister satisfaction—but only for a time. Addison's church thermometer was marked according to the following figure :

Ignorance  
Persecution  
Wrath  
Zeal  
CHURCH  
Moderation  
Lukewarmness  
Infidelity  
Ignorance

'The reader will observe,' he pointed out, 'that Church is placed in the middle point of the glass, between Zeal and Moderation. . . . The worst of it is, that when once it begins to rise, it has still an inclination to ascend, insomuch that it is apt to climb from Zeal to Wrath, and from Wrath to Persecution, which always ends in Ignorance, and very often proceeds from it.'

**Second Day.**—*Gal. iv. 19, 20 ; Acts xviii. 4, 5, xxviii. 16-23.*

Paul not only never lost an opportunity of bearing witness, he made opportunities. His heart was full of love for men. The Galatians had been alienated from him—'bewitched,' as he put it—but he did not give them up. He sent a letter, intense and passionate, that he might thus rouse and restore his 'dear children.' If Jews refused to hear him, he did not despair, but moved on confidently to take the good news to the Gentiles. Even in Rome he summoned 'the principal Jews' to his prison lodging, and tried to win them over to the Kingdom, using their familiar and beloved Scriptures as a way of approach to their minds and hearts. The modern appeals are different from Charles Wesley's :

The love of Christ doth me constrain  
To seek the wandering souls of men ;  
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,  
To snatch them from the gaping grave.

But the spirit was Paul's and it must be ours, for it is timeless.

**Third Day.**—*1 Cor. iv. 8-15.*

Carefully study that piece of self-portraiture. Paul gave up his life to people who were ungrateful and who constantly misunderstood him. Lord Randolph Churchill wrote : 'More than two-thirds, in all probability, of my life is over, and I will not spend the remainder of my years in beating my head against a stone wall. There has been no consideration, no indulgence, no memory nor gratitude—nothing but spite, malice, and abuse. I am quite tired and dead sick of it all, and will not continue political life any longer.'

Paul had passed through similar experiences, but he was not embittered, for with him

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the cords  
with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out  
of sight.

**Fourth Day.**—1 *Thess. ii.* 9 ; 2 *Thess. iii.* 6-9 ; *Acts xviii.* 1-3,  
*xx.* 33-5.

Paul's trade consisted in cutting, and sewing into tent-cloth, goats' hair—long and tenacious—that had been woven into a stout fabric. Dr. Moffatt prefers 'workers in leather by trade' to 'tentmakers.' The Fathers styled Paul 'leather-cutter' and 'cobbler,' for the strong haircloth was as tough as leather. 'Think of him, dropping awl and thread and shears after a heavy day's toil, and hastening to the house of worship, to reason with Jews and Greeks and persuade them that Jesus was the Christ, although he knew that, the service over, he must return to sit up half or all the night at an occupation which barely furnished him with bread ! Think of him as delighting thus to spend himself in the service of God and man ; and compare our conduct with his, our love with his !' (Samuel Cox.)

**Fifth Day.**—2 *Cor. iv.* 7-11 ; *xii.* 14. *Gal. vi.* 17.

These simple, but moving, words flame with the glow of Paul's devotion. His sufferings were only 'the owner's stamp of Jesus.' Recall one of Hudson Taylor's letters : 'We did not come to China because missionary work here was either safe or easy, but because He had called us. We did not enter upon our present positions under a guarantee of human protection, but relying on the promise of His presence. The accidents of ease or difficulty, of apparent safety or danger, of man's approbation or disapproval, in

no wise affect our duty.' Recall, too, Izaak Walton's description of George Herbert; 'He knew the ways of learning; knew what Nature does willingly; and what, when it is forced by fire; knew the ways of honour, and when glory inclines the soul to noble expressions; knew the court; knew the ways of pleasure, of love, of wit, of music, and upon what terms he declined all these for the service of his Master JESUS.' Is there *real* sacrifice for Jesus in your life?

**Sixth Day.**—*Rom. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Titus i. 1; Rom. i. 9; 1 Cor. vii. 22.*

The word used by Paul, δοῦλος, is stronger than 'servant'; 'slave' is the more accurate translation. In the Greek and Roman world in which Paul lived slavery meant absolute surrender to the master's will, however hard and distasteful the ordered task might be. The slave possessed no personality. He was under the despotic rule of his owner.

'Paul,' wrote R. D. Shaw, 'has been called with a divine calling to the most glorious work in which a man can engage, to be to this estranged and weary earth an ambassador of heaven. Received as divine, this vocation is accepted with supreme devotion. Paul knows no other rule, no other will but Christ's. Like a kneeling slave, with upturned gaze fixed on the Master's face, he receives his trust, and never for a single moment does he swerve from its fulfilment.'

Paul had made the great discovery that such service is not slavery, but perfect freedom.

## SUMMARY

From the very outset of his career, Paul was full of energy, and, whatever his hand found to do, he did it with his might. He persecuted the Church with zest, but his ardour, at first bitter and vindictive, was transmuted by his new Master

Into something rich and strange.

In the Pharisaic days he would gladly compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and now he counted no hour too precious, no journey too hazardous, no risk too great, if he might be the means of bringing any into living fellowship with his loving Lord. In the world of his day there were dark depths of depravity, but his Lord had bidden His disciples to catch men, therefore he went forth to fling his net even into the blackest waters. In his letter to the Corinthians he gave a sombre catalogue of vice, but he could speak of souls transformed and purified (1 Cor. vi. 11).

His devotion produced amazing results. He won 'outsiders' in large numbers over an immense and varied area. Note his triumphs at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 49), Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 4), Beroea (Acts xvii. 12), Athens—where his mission is often so wrongly regarded as a failure (Acts xvii. 34), Corinth (Acts xviii. 8), Ephesus (Acts xix. 10). He could declare that he had preached from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Rom. xv. 16-20), and add that he intended to go to Spain (Rom. xv. 23-5).

Deissmann has reckoned 'about twenty places in which the primitive apostolic cult was established, and about thirty places connected with the Pauline cult of Christ.'

It is remarkable, too, how varied were the attainments and the status of the converts whom he won. Luke was a doctor, Crispus a president of the synagogue, Lydia a prosperous merchant, Dionysius a member of the council of the Areopagus, another was a jailer, Damaris is regarded by some as a courtesan, Philemon was a slave-owner, and Onesimus his slave.

As Ramsay has pointed out: 'The classes where education and work go hand in hand were the first to come under the influence of the new religion. On the one hand, the uneducated and grossly superstitious rustics were unaffected by it. On the other hand, there were "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble" in the Churches of the first century, i.e. not many professional teachers of wisdom and philosophy, not many of the official and governing class, not many of the hereditarily privileged class. But the working and thinking classes, with the students, if not the professors, at the Universities, were attracted to the new teaching; and it spread among them with a rapidity that seemed to many modern critics incredible and fabulous, till it was justified by recent discoveries.'

So enthusiastic was Paul that he could transform a restricted prison into a centre of Christian crusade, whence he sent out immortal letters to the Churches he loved, and could influence the soldiers who guarded him (Phil. i. 12, 13). Even there he could win a runaway slave. His prayer was that he might miss no opportunity of preaching Jesus (Col. iv. 3, 4). He was led in triumph in Christ (2 Cor. ii. 14, R.V.).

In a Roman triumph, fettered prisoners preceded the victorious general at the head of his troops. Amid the mingled odours of flowers and incense he made his way to the Temple of Jupiter through the applauding crowds. To Jesus Paul ascribed full command; he himself was one of the bound. He had been taken

prisoner by his Lord on that memorable journey to Damascus, and from that moment he was a willing captive, bound by the golden chain of love, his one aim being to bring gladness to the heart of Him to whom he had surrendered all.

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. 'The preponderating impression which Paul makes is that of health' (Wrede). Discuss this.
2. Mark on a map every place which Paul mentions in his letters, or at which we are told he preached. Examine their variety.
3. Paul reached Rome as a prisoner. Study his work there; the people he touched; the letters he wrote.
4. 'It is impossible to measure what might be done by a few men who, catching a vision of a world evangelized, yield themselves wholly to God, to be used by Him to realize the vision' (Dr. J. R. Mott). Consider this in the light of this week's study, and together think out its challenge, closing the group in silence.



PAUL'S CHARM



## STUDY XI

### PAUL'S CHARM

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—*Acts* *xx.* 37, 38, *xxi.* 1-6 ; *Gal.* *iv.* 12-15.

These vivid pictures bear their testimony to Paul's amazing charm. He is often, falsely, regarded as a dry theologian. Here we see him warm and tender, an attractive and engaging personality. 'The fascination of St. Paul's personality lies in his humanity ; he is the most human of all the apostles.' At Ephesus, at Tyre, and in Galatia, we see how much affection he won. He never shirked the painful duty of plain speech, and he never flattered. To the Ephesians he revealed the secret of his charm, it was his aim to grow up into Christ (*Eph.* *iv.* 15). In him there was a perfect blending of mercy and judgement, of love and truth.

**Second Day.**—*Phil.* *iv.* 5 ; 2 *Cor.* *x.* 1 ; *Gal.* *vi.* 1, 2 ; *Eph.* *iv.* 1-3.

Paul firmly believed in the winsomeness of true religion. He was an eager scholar in the school of 'the first true Gentleman that ever breathed.' Simple and natural, he made Christianity attractive. Paul in his day taught what these moderns have declared in our own. 'To try too hard to make people good is one way to make them worse ; the only way to make them good is to be good' (George Macdonald).

'Religion is not to be proved, but to be lived' (Drummond).

'There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbours good. One person I have to make good : myself. But my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may' (Robert Louis Stevenson).

Apply these criteria to Paul's life—and your own.

**Third Day.**—2 *Cor. viii.* 1-10.

Paul was moved to make this collection among the Gentile churches for the poor at Jerusalem, not only as a measure of practical relief, but also because—as Professor David Smith has written: ‘he recognized in it the possibility of beneficent and far-reaching results. He anticipated the healing of the disastrous breach in the East, and he foresaw that this would facilitate his further ministry in the West, and especially in the imperial capital, which was already the goal of his desire.’ The Corinthians had undertaken this task with alacrity, but their ardour had cooled, and to Paul’s dismay he learned from Titus that no contribution was forthcoming. Note how tactfully he handled this delicate matter. Such success in dealing with the lukewarm and soon-wearied is all too rare.

**Fourth Day.**—1 *Cor. ix.* 19-23.

Dean Stanley said of Charles Kingsley: ‘He was what he was, not by virtue of his office, but by virtue of what God had made him in himself. He was, we might almost say, a layman in the guise or disguise of a clergyman—fishing with the fishermen, hunting with the huntsmen, able to hold his own in tent or camp, with courtier or with soldier, an example that a genial companion may be a Christian gentleman, that a Christian clergyman need not be a member of a separate caste and a stranger to the common interests of his countrymen.’ Contrast that with Esther Summerson’s view of her godmother in *Bleak House*: ‘She was so very good herself, I thought that the badness of other people made her frown all her life.’

Consider which of these types Paul, nay Jesus, most resembled.

**Fifth Day.**—*Acts xvii.* 22-8.

Note how carefully Paul seized on any possible

point of contact between himself and his critical, supercilious audience. Instead of flatly denouncing them as pagans, he praised their devout spirit. He took as his text an inscription he had noticed on one of their altars, and declared that they and he alike worshipped the same divine nature, and that he could lead them to a living experience of the object of their quest. He reinforced his appeal by reference to Epimenides and Aratus, and also to Stoic and Epicurean teaching.

The results were apparently poor, but consider the obstacles. To the Greeks the cross was 'sheer folly,' and Paul's doctrine was to the men of Athens, not simply new, but incredibly futile. Yet he so successfully bridged the gulf that lay between preacher and hearers as to win converts for the new faith—men like Stephanas and Dionysius, as well as 'a woman called Damaris.'

**Sixth Day.**—I *Cor. iii. 3-6, xvi. 12.*

Consider all that the last verse implies. Apollos had charmed his Corinthian hearers by the depth of his learning and the brilliance of his rhetoric. A party had arisen within the Church which contrasted his fluency with Paul's poor delivery. They were setting one teacher against another. Yet Paul gave Apollos credit for loyalty to him, and, so far from being afraid of his presence in Corinth, urged him to leave Ephesus for his earlier sphere of toil.

Paul hated mistrust and faction. His soul was too clean and sweet to harbour verminous suspicions. Vanity and self-assertion, dread of being passed over or of being undervalued, found no place in his catholic heart.

## SUMMARY

Donald Hankey in memorable words gave us the soldiers' view of Christianity : ' He thinks that Christianity consists in believing the Bible and setting up to be better than your neighbours. By believing the Bible he means believing that Jonah was swallowed by the whale. By setting up to be better than your neighbours he means not drinking, not swearing, and preferably not smoking, being close-fisted with your money, avoiding the companionship of doubtful characters, and refusing to acknowledge that such have any claim upon you.'

Paul stood out in marked contrast to that delineation of a Christian. He was generous, full of rich humour, large-hearted, and courteous. His hands were coarsened with hard and unremitting toil, but his heart was that of a knight and his ways those of a true gentleman.

He had an amazing faculty for winning the affection of people, and even children loved him. For his sake men would endure great discomfort and privation, and some even were ready to hazard their lives. The visitors who came and went whilst he was in his prison lodging in Rome had travelled many difficult and dangerous miles that they might see him and hear his loved voice. Timothy came and went. Luke and Aristarchus, tried and trusted, stood nigh their friend. Epaphroditus came, bearing a gracious gift from Philippi, and added to the grace of that gift by his own loving attendance on the prisoner, until he himself fell ill. John Mark, once the renegade, who by his defection had caused the estrangement between Paul and Barnabas, appeared, and ere he left gave such proof of his amendment as to make Paul send for him later on (2 Tim. iv. 11). Tychicus came with news of the Church at Ephesus, Epaphras arrived from Colossae, and Onesiphorus scoured Rome to find his

loved master in the things of Christ (2 Tim. i. 17). In the most difficult situation he showed tact and resource. 'Paul,' wrote St. Chrysostom, 'who walked in the Master's steps, diversified his discourse to suit his scholars' need, now burning and cutting, anon applying gentle salves.'

He had to face a distressing situation in the Corinthian Church, but he delicately approached the question by giving thanks for their courage and faith (1 Cor. i. 4-7). They had failed to make their offerings for the poor at Jerusalem, but he assumed their readiness to help (2 Cor. ix. 1, 2).

J. Brierley wrote : ' Many of us in the management, or rather mismanagement of our domestic life are like miners who, working at a gold reef, should direct their whole attention to the sand, rubble, bare rock they meet there ; turning them over and over, cursing their unproductiveness, and leaving untouched the precious metal that is there waiting for an eye and a hand. For, be sure, every one of your circle is a gold reef. The rubble is there, doubtless, and the bare rock. But your fortune is in the gold. Your business is to aim at that, and at nothing else.'

That was supremely Paul's aim. Read his letter to Philemon, and see how skilfully he approached the slave-owner, using pathos and humour to enforce his persuasion. He had the rich gift of true sympathy, and could perfectly enter into the feelings of men whose temperament differed widely from his. Timothy was nervous, but Paul the dauntless could understand the young man's timidity, and try to make his way easier (1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11).

He always remembered the poor (Gal. ii. 10), and he delighted in the heavy task of collecting contributions from the Gentile churches for their brethren in Jerusalem.

He so lived and loved as to merit the judgement of Coleridge : ' St. Paul was a man of the finest manners ever known.'

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Consider the various types of men and women who were attracted to Paul, and discuss what it was in him that appealed to each.
2. 'I hate smoothness. I believe in plain speaking,' says John Blunt with emphasis. Is he right? If not, where is he wrong?
3. Define 'tact.' Make use of Paul's help in your definition.
4. Are we to regard Paul's 'all things to all men' as weakness, hypocrisy, or evasion? If not, what was it?



PAUL'S SECRET



## STUDY XII

### PAUL'S SECRET

#### DAILY READINGS

**First Day.**—*Acts ix.* 10-12, *xvi.* 6-8 ; *Rom. i.* 9, 10, *xv.* 30-2.

Paul always moved with a sure foot. His was Wesley's faith :

By Thine unerring Spirit led,  
We shall not in the desert stray ;  
We shall not full direction need,  
Nor miss our providential way ;  
As far from danger as from fear,  
While love, almighty love, is near.

He was sensitive to the Spirit's guidance because of the unbroken communion between his soul and God, a communion which began immediately after his experience on the Damascus road. Walter James prayed : ' Make Thy presence, Lord, an increasing power in my life ; let it become the supreme fact and factor of my daily existence. Let all my decisions—small and great—be made in Thy light.'

That was how Paul prayed. Do we honestly pray like that ?

**Second Day.**—2 *Cor. i.* 3-5, 8-10.

Paul radiated cheerfulness and contentment. Often sick, often persecuted with bitter hatred, a prisoner for long and weary months that dragged into years, he had proved the security of the love that would not let him go. It was that rich, deep experience that enabled him to help others.

Overhead telegraph and telephone wires are liable

to damage by storm, but those laid underground are available in all weathers. Is your communion with Jesus liable to interruption when storms arise? How inadequately we meet the needs of men and women who long for real help! Paul could always speak the right word and give the appropriate comfort, because he himself had fully realized the power of divine help. Miss Havergal's prayer suggests the cause of our failures:

O strengthen me, that, while I stand  
Firm on the rock, and strong in Thee,  
I may stretch out a loving hand  
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

**Third Day.**—2 *Tim. i. 3* ; *Col. i. 9, 10* ; 1 *Thess. iii. 10* ; 2 *Thess. i. 11*.

Paul knew by experience the value of intercession. Not only are his letters full of the fact that he himself prays, but we find that he begs for the prayers of his converts and fellow Christians. Recall the influence of Forbes Robinson, the Cambridge don—an influence which he ascribed to the power of prayer. The Rev. H. Bisseker wrote of him: 'Prayer to him meant more than a light repetition of words. He used often, I believe, to spend as long as half an hour at a time in seeking blessing for a single man. We cannot doubt that, in the strong influence which he himself exerted upon so many of those who knew him, such persistent prayer received at least a part of its own answer.' Consider the challenge of all this, and recall Bishop Wilson's words: 'He that has learned to pray as he ought has got the secret of a holy life.'

**Fourth Day.**—2 *Cor. xiii. 3-6* ; *Col. i. 24-9*.

The secret of Paul's amazing influence lay in the truth of his claim, 'Christ . . . speaketh in me.' His success was governed by his intimacy with, and his

likeness to, his Lord. In James Lane Allen's *Cathedral Singer* the art master says : ' No students of mine, if I could have my way, should ever paint from a model that failed to call forth the finest feelings.' Paul always painted from such a Model. He was always ' looking unto Jesus.' The longer he looked, the more he loved ; the more clearly he saw Him as He was, the more he grew like Him. Samuel Rutherford wrote : ' My desire is that my Lord would give me broader and deeper thoughts to feed myself with wondering at His love.' That was Paul's prayer, and the answer was seen in the fullness of his life and in the wealth of his message.

**Fifth Day.**—2 *Cor. vi. 16* ; *Gal. v. 16* ; *Rom. viii. 8-11* ; *Col. iii. 3*.

Paul believed in positives, for he saw the utter futility of mere prohibitions. If a man's eyes are truly fixed on the Cross, the mundane and selfish will fail to allure. If the life of the spirit is strong, the life of the animal will be impossible. Paul had discovered the true basis of reconstruction, whether social or individual, in ' Jesus Christ, and no one can lay any other ' (1 *Cor. iii. 11*). Contrast Paul's living religion with that of the Forsytes, thus described by John Galsworthy : ' Originally, perhaps, members of some primitive sect, they were now, in the natural course of things, members of the Church of England, and caused their wives and children to attend with some regularity the more fashionable churches of the Metropolis. To have doubted their Christianity would have caused them both pain and surprise.'

**Sixth Day.**—2 *Cor. iv. 7, v. 17* ; *Gal. ii. 20* ; *Phil. iii. 7-9*.

Paul had so utterly dedicated himself to his Master that he regarded himself as a personality placed

entirely at God's disposal. Dean Inge has quoted Huxley's saying : ' It does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him.' Mrs. Howard Taylor has told of a girl who had obviously entered into Paul's experience. She was asked why she had devoted herself to missionary work in China, and her reply was : ' I seemed to see the Lord Jesus Christ standing alone among the heathen—dumb. No one to speak for Him ; no one through whose life He could pour the love of His heart ; waiting for you and me to come to His side and be lips for Him, and love for Him, and win those waiting souls to Him.'

Miss Havergal's familiar hymn, ' Take my life,' precisely sums up Paul's attitude to Jesus. Can we sing it sincerely ?

## SUMMARY

Captain Hadfield, in his essay on 'The Psychology of Power,' has thus written of a certain type of religious teacher: 'In their dread of emotionalism—the unruly debauch of unrestrained feeling—and its consequences in conduct, they have attempted to abolish all emotion as a thing either dangerous or vulgar. In so doing they have failed to appreciate that the Christian religion is founded on an emotion—the all-embracing emotion of love. To rob the soul of emotion is to deprive it of its driving force and leave it lifeless. Matthew Arnold's description of religion as being morality *tinged* with emotion is a delightful though unconscious satire on what religion actually is at the present day, but certainly not what it should be. A "tinge" of emotion is not the kind of thing to turn the world upside down.'

It was no mere 'tinge' of emotion, but overwhelming love for a near, divine Friend, that was the secret of Paul's new life, the key to his thinking, the inspiration of his service. In his pre-Christian days he had been attached to principles; afterwards he was wedded to a Person. At first he believed a creed; later he loved a Christ. As a Pharisee he was anxious to know *it*; as a Christian he longed to know *Him*.

This fellowship with a living Jesus was the most real and vivid fact of everyday life. He had 'many adversaries,' there were earthly friends who had forsaken him, there were those very dear to him who were far away, there was—if we may accept this conjecture—domestic sorrow; 'he had married after the Jewish fashion, but his wife was now deceased, and so also was her child, and he had resolved to remain a widower. It is significant that one so affectionate should have maintained an almost unbroken silence regarding this

mournful chapter of his life-story ; and, in view of the sternness of his attitude toward women, it would seem as though there were here a hidden tragedy and a bitter memory ' (Professor David Smith).

Yet, in spite of all these shadows, or perhaps because of them, Jesus grew more and more precious to him. He was always sure that, however rough and devious the way might be, his Master was there. As Dr. Deissmann has said : ' It is no doubt generally admitted that St. Paul's religion centred in Christ, but how differently people conceive of the Christ-centred Christianity of St. Paul ! Often it has been represented as identical with a Christological Christianity. But the religion of St. Paul is Christ-centred in a far deeper and more realistic sense ; it is not, first of all, a doctrine concerning Christ ; it is " fellowship " with Christ ! ' This rich fellowship meant so much to him that he yearned to share it with others. He longed for men to enter into the glory of the new experience of the living Jesus (Col. ii. 6, 7 ; 1 Cor. i, 9). Herein lay the secret of his mighty influence over all sorts and conditions of men (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10 ; Phil. iv. 13). He had deliberately turned away from the primrose path, and he had proved the truth of his Master's promise to the man who lost his life for His sake.

His dynamic was ' the Spirit of Jesus ' ; that was his secret—a life flooded with the mighty tides of close, mystical communion with a divine Friend, who would hold him always in strong yet tender hands ; who would make no mistakes in ordering his life on earth ; who, when life's warfare was accomplished, would receive him to himself, so that to die would be far the best. Christ lived in him, and his only glory was in the Cross of Christ.



QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION OR GROUP  
DISCUSSION

1. Paul had learned a great secret (Phil. iv. 12). How had he been taught? Consider some of the lessons.
2. 'There has been no religious revival within Christianity that has not been, on one side at least, a return to St. Paul' (Inge). Verify this, and examine its message for to-day.
3. 'According to his (Paul's) own deepest, most deliberate, most systematic teaching, it is the life of Christ, the living Christ, energizing even now within the faithful soul, that constitutes both the primary source and the ultimate motive of Christian sanctity' (Von Hügel). Discuss this, and relate it to your own life.
4. 'Paul's praying carried Paul's converts farther along the highway of sainthood than Paul's preaching did' (Bounds). Is this true, and, if so, what does it imply?





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